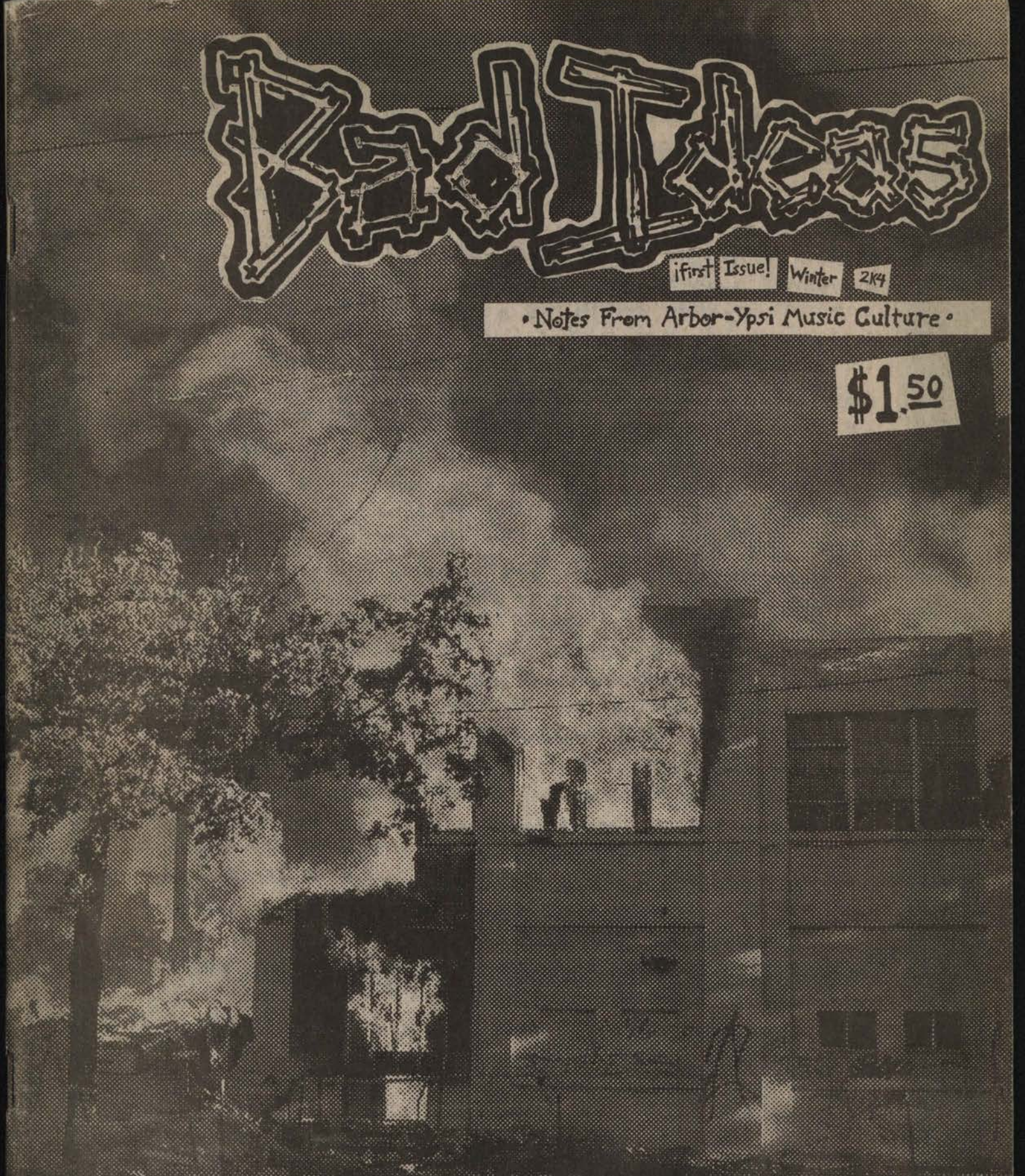


Dead Trees

First Issue! Winter 2004

• Notes From Arbor-Ypsi Music Culture •

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Columns • Comics • Reviews • Ect.

•introduction•

Hey so welcome to the first issue of Bad Ideas - This has been on my mind for quite a while now. And from talking to people around town, about this, it's a project everyone's wanted to see happen. Now that my life is coming together enough to start something new, here it is. (half a month later than planned, but it's here)

This zine or magazine whichever way you want to call it, was created in hopes of bringing together the fragments of the A2/ypsi music scene, or I guess it's not specifically music. It's artist and activist, writers, complainers, musicians, and thinkers, and you know, the people who do shit around here and rarely get credit for it. Now before you start yelling "nobody does shit here!" listen. They do. You just don't pay attention.

Since the days when I first stopped watching movies every weekend and started going to shows. I've always been amazed by the different things people were doing. There'd be punk bands playing with rock-a-billy followed by noise + then a melodic kinda art-math band, all for three dollars at the Unitarian Church or the Half Ass. So many different ideas + people spending time together for the same reason. Being 16 years old and seeing all of this for the first time was pretty much the most exciting thing I'd ever seen in my life.

It didn't last. It wasn't long until I started to notice that the crowd changed for each band. One band would finish + every one would leave + a whole new group of people would come in to see the next band. Not that there weren't people who stayed the whole time, but there was a lot of trading places. But it was still pretty fucking cool, and cooler as I came to learn that most towns have pretty genre specific shows. My town (+ the one next door) had some of the coolest shows any where!

Alas, here we are 2004. 10 years later and so many bands, records, venues, stores, patches, zines, events, and graffiti latter. There is still so much going on, from hardcore shows to shopping cart races. Protests to film screenings. We really do have our shit together in a lot of ways.

I wanted to do this zine mainly for two reasons. One, to make a record (a history) of what's always been happening. And two, to bring all the little fringes together a little bit. We may not end up going to any event we wouldn't have normally, I figure it'd be nice to know about what other people in the area are doing.

this zine is for all the people who make this town interesting. And for all the people who enjoy these parts about it.

As it stands now, this is a pretty incomplete model and really we (the bad idea collective) can't be everywhere. So here's the thing, right. You have as much say in what this publication looks like as I do. You go to shows and other events and have an opinion. If you wanna see an interview You should do it. We need people to write articles, we need people to write interviews, & send in shit for us to review and people to review the shit we get sent in. We want to start a history section that has old flyers, zine articles & photos. You have those things sitting at your house. Send us a copy. I know every other publication has basically the same message about the readership's control of the content, and I know how little people actually contribute but really, This is our town as long as we live here and you're not as small and unimportant as you might sometimes feel.

It was one guys idea to start a shopping cart race. one guy started all that crazy shit. -

w/ love & action

Josh Redd Sanchez

(a note on the cover)

the cover photo is of the Perf Net (or the technology center) burning down. the whole situation behind the selling and destruction of that place is an important event as far as local art & music goes. I was hoping someone would write about it, but no one did. maybe next issue. I look at that photo & think of the phoenix story, or my favorite quote from a patch popular in the 90's. "life is ecstatic intercourse, between destruction & creation."

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Next Issue April '04

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So you want to do an Interview? We would love to
print you but first here are a few guidelines.

-If you are interviewing a band **DO NOT EVER** ask
them who they are, who they play for or what
records they're putting out or any other asinine
questions. There are these great things called
introductions that you put before the interview that
contains all of that information. If you ask stupid
questions it says nothing about the band other than
their interviewer is an idiot. Don't fucking do it.
That goes for interviews with non-bands also don't
ask questions you could write about in the intro. It's
just dumb, a waste of paper, and we won't print it.
-For right now we'd like to have mostly interviews
with local folks, or at least SE Michigan. Eventually
we'll want stuff from all over but there really is so
much rad shit going on here. We'd like to focus on
that right now. But of course if there's some one
from out of town that likes coming to the area or has
come a few times and plans n coming back or some
one with connections to the area or if they're in town
and real cool. For instance when "Afro Punk" was
shown in Ypsilanti it would have been good to
interview the director. You got the idea, lets focus
on what's happening here for now.
-Don't forget to put some contact info in the
interview.

Send interviews on formatted hard copy (10 7/8 by
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thisbadidea@yahoo.com call us if you have
questions

We wanna review your shit, books, zines, movies,
records, etc..

Please send reviews to:
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807 North Main St.
Ann Arbor, Mi
48104

As of now there is nothing that we won't review, we
prefer small press and Indy stuff, but we'll review
what ever you send us all styles and mediums
welcome. Because we publish quarterly it may take
a while to get your stuff reviewed. Below are the
four due dates for review material.

March 1st (April issue)

May 1st (July issue)

August 1st (October issue)

November 1st (January issue)

Please send a contact address with a postage paid
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Hey all you flaky
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 said they'd write
 but didn't - well the
 next deadline is
 March 1st get your
 column or you lose
 all rights to
 complain about the
 music scene here,
 forever. Got it?
 Don't make us put
 your name in print
 and let everyone
 know how lame you
 are - B. I.-

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BAD IDEAS IS ISSUED QUARTERLY

LOOK FOR US IN

APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER, AND JANUARY

YPSI / ARBOR

2003

CHAMBERLIN MANN

Ypsilanti was established in 1823, it is the second oldest city in the State of Michigan. Ypsilanti 2003 = Ann Arbor 1994
Ypsi at one time had the world's largest assembly plant.

By 1832, three stage lines served Ypsilanti. In 2003, Ypsi serves as a stopping point for lesser known / punk bands on their way to bigger cities.

Appalachian immigrants are and were so important to the town that Ypsilanti willingly was called "Ypsitucky". It is a label that current, non-thinking Ann Arborites still use - to deride its neighbor. It's also a not-so-subtle way to simultaneously tap into midwesterner hatred of the South.

"Chick Inn" by the Demolition Doll Rods.

Ypsilanti is the anti-Ann Arbor. But you get the feeling Ypsi's leadership wishes it was more like Ann Arbor - with its higher tax base and more sedate citizenry.

Ypsi's namesake - Gen. Dimitrius Ypsilanti:

With three hundred men he held off an army of thirty thousand. Having exhausted his provisions, he escaped one night beyond the enemy lines, with his entire command, having lost not a single man.

Is it odd for a town with a zero-Greek population to embrace a Greek war hero? Ypsi is much smaller than Ann Arbor, yet here we are.

Ypsilanti Water Tower was recently named "The World's Most Phallic Building".

Don't get me started on the Green Room and how "cool" it was. If it were so cool it would still be doing shows. I know this is sacrilege, but... EVERY time I went there to

see an amazing touring band - the place was empty. Things aren't much better now, but they could be worse.

Ypsi was brushed by assassins: Charles J. Guiteau was the assassin of President Garfield. And what serial killers? John Norman Collins: the co-ed killer.

The impending Water St. projects may turn Ypsi into another "new" Ann Arbor (which is now the new Royal Oak - yet is still not as "cool" - Royal Oak is the new Birmingham...Brooklyn's Williamsburg is...).

I-94 was the first highway in the United States, and Ypsilanti was the location of the first triple-decker highway bridge in the United States.

"I'd Rather Be in Ann Arbor": We still hear people in AA refer to Ypsi as "Little Detroit" (with more than a hint of prejudicial / racist wink). To whom I say, "Nice, you just stay over there then, please?"

The real McCoy: 3 Hummer H2's poorly parked in the new Whole Foods parking lot. Bo Bo heaven = Social hell for the rest of us.

Rumors: Patsy Cline once lived in Ypsilanti as well as Phyllis Diller who sang in the Presbyterian Church choir.

People seem to imply that Ypsi is becoming what AA was years ago: attractive to the people who make a place interesting. If the Stooges were forming today, do you think they'd survive in today's AA? Or could they even afford it? (Didn't Iggy grow up in a trailer on the EAST side of Carpenter Rd? - Would today's Ann Arbor claim such a trailer park?)

AA Median age	36.7
Ypsi Median age	27.4

When we first moved to AA years ago, we heard that Ypsi was dirty / crime-ridden (and a place everyone went to buy their "harder" drugs). But after hearing parallel

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disparaging remarks about our homeland (The South), we decided to check out the "evil side of Washtenaw Co."

We moved to Ypsi ASAP. And now we attempt to boost the idea of this "New Ypsi". But we're not the only ones making noise. And we might be foiled.

I think the root of all this looking down towards Ypsi is found Ypsi's population: lots of transplanted Southerners (descended from coal miners whom Henry Ford invited to work in his local plants) and more African-Americans than in most Detroit suburbs.

Feel: how artists, punks, and gay people are fleeing Ann Arbor because they no longer feel welcome in the "new" Tree Town? This could still kill Ypsilanti, if this fact is alerted to Ypsi's absentee landlords. Jumping the "cool cities" gun with higher rents = jacked artists.

Disturbing: popularity of the "Ann Arbor Sucks" stickers / shirts could easily give way to Ypsi Sucks. No one likes a sore winner next to a sore loser. Bet this looks stupid to Lansing?

Damage Control

Chuck damage

Ahhh, here it is, the first issue of Bad Ideas. I am pretty excited about this magazine for a number of reasons. First and foremost is the lack of zines in the Ann Arbor Ypsilanti area. I have to say that the group of people who started this have my utmost respect. Josh Redd and I go back almost two years and have quite a history of butting heads and disagreeing on many issues. I would like to first off thank him for putting aside our differences and asking me to do a column for this fine magazine that you are reading.

When I was first approached to do a column I was super excited and thought that I'd tackle the

diminishing punk rock scene in this area, but after many weeks of thought, I decided that the task of getting down to the root of that problem would be an undertaking that I, as an amateur writer, would not be prepared to do, yet. So after a little bit of thought and a whole bunch of mind changing, I am going to start out slow and try to build up a little momentum. So for the first issue I thought that I'd give you a brief introduction to where I'm coming from and give you a list of a few shows that were highlights for me in 2003.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Chuck. Most know me by my nickname of Chuck Damage. The nickname was bestowed upon me by an old dear friend with whom I have long since lost contact with. The nickname was not given to me as a tribute to my ability to kick ass and take names, but rather my striking resemblance to British comedian Alexi Sayles. Some of you may recognize that name from a British television comedy called The Young Ones. One particular episode of this show featured Sayles as the landlord to the "Young Ones" named Brian Damage, apparently all of our neighborhood friends agreed and I was dubbed Chuck Damage in 1987 and the name has been with me since. Sorry to disappoint anyone who thought otherwise.

My stint in punk rock began in 1985. I was introduced to Black Flag through a girl friend who moved to San Francisco from our little blue collar town Wayne, Michigan at the end of ninth grade. When she moved back the following fall she brought back a dubbed cassette tape with a band called Black Flag on side A, and another band called the Sex Pistols. I couldn't believe what I heard on that tape. Two or three weeks after I was sporting a Mohawk and the required trench coat or army jacket and the rest is history.

I try to catch as many shows as humanly possible. This means that during the summer I see three to four shows a week. It's hard to remember them all, but I am going to give you highlights from some of the most memorable shows of the past year.

Number one on my list of quality

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a pretty cool glam punk band that totally reminded me of the Stitches. It's too bad that the night was plagued by technical difficulties.

shows has to be The Hudson Falcons. (www.hudsonfalcons.com) Mark Linsky and crew are constantly touring. I think that I saw them at least three times this year. For those of you who are unfamiliar these guys play working class punk and roll. Most of their songs deal with the abuses and rights of workers world wide. Most people hear blue collar and they automatically think right wing politics. Well, you would be wrong to slap the Falcons with a right wing stamp. These guys are pure rock and roll with punk roots, 77 style punk rock with all the hooks and a conscience.

Lead singer Mark Linsky also toured solo this year promoting his acoustic album Stay Hard, Stay Hungry, Stay Alive - Songs of Freedom on Roachenders Records. The record contains covers of a diverse range of artists including Springsteen, Son Volt, Steve Earle, Little Steven, Billy Bragg/Wilco, Bob Marley, and Bob Dylan. I am not usually a fan of acoustic music, but I highly recommend this record.

An entertaining evening was provided at the Elbow Room in Ypsilanti by Canadian punk rockers the Sick Fits. (www.thesickfits.com) They were These guys seemed whipped by the road apparently having horrible luck with shows in the United States, but the potential was there, I would totally like to see them again.

One of the biggest surprises for me was the Austin, Texas band The Crack Pipes. (www.thecrackpipes.com) Holy Shit these guys kicked huge amounts of ass. Full on punk rock with a seven inch on Sympathy. If you see anything by these guys, do not think twice, buy their shit! The best way to describe them is full on punk rock assault. Kinda sounded like Vegas Thunder to me, but so kick ass.

Okay, the biggest surprise show was a band called The Leah Quinelle All Stars featuring HAPPY. Oh my god, they were seriously the girl version of the Beat Happening. There are some other people that think so as well

because they mock that comparison in a comic on their web site.

(www.sleeptrip.com/lqasfh) This trio writes love songs about their friends and tours pretty consistently. Their sound is very under produced, okay actually un produced, but extremely soulful and honestly performed. Watching them play made my belly tickle and put me in an awesome mood. I want them to write a love song about me! The drummer, Robin, is incredible. The whole thing is just awesome. Get the CD, it's light and it's fun.

On the local music front The big obvious check outs are the Bump-n-Uglies, The Drakes and The Lanternjack. All of who are on my record label Lowdown Recordings (www.lowdownrecordings.com) This is it for this time. Send all mail, records, tapes and 8 tracks to:

Chuck
P.O. Box 4502
Ann Arbor Mi 48106-4502
and feel free to email me

Fight or Flight

Spencer Nuisance

Ann Arbor, Michigan. Bastion of creativity. Pinnacle of enlightenment. A freewheeling, freethinking, bohemian paradise where anything can and usually does happen.

Sound familiar? I know we've all heard the stories of the good old days: from middle-aged ex-hippies. And I know some people still like to think of this town like that. But it certainly doesn't FEEL familiar to me.

That seems to be because some of those same self-proclaimed ex-hippies who spend all their money

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at Starbucks have been making a concerted effort to drive both the working class and the artistic community out. So then they can be all alone in Governor Grannholm's hip: little fenced in amusement park/shopping mall, full of Border's Books, Espresso Royale Cafe's, sports wear chains and trendy bars.

But who will serve them their latte's? I'm sure they're counting on those U of M student part-timers to fill their retail service needs. But since Proposition B's greenbelt stop-build has passed and property values everywhere within the city limits will soon skyrocket, the only students who can afford to live here will be the ones who don't need a job because they've got daddy's credit card.

The Sad fact of the matter is that we live in a college town. With a college economy. And while the University does bring a lot of money in, it tends to stay in the family. And now with rent so high already in prime spots such as South State Street and East Liberty, local businesses can't afford to keep up with all the big chain corporations that have moved in (or started here!).

Originally this city was based around a railroad depot. But it's been awhile since that was a thriving industry capable of supporting a population of over 100,000 people. So what are we to

do?

That's a good question. A lot of people have decided to leave. After the doubly destructive act of the city's sale of the tech center's affordable studio space (and housing, shh.) and the imminent building of the new low income housing-free YMCA on the site, anybody with something positive to add to the community has nowhere to do it. Besides, we don't have time anyway; we're all too busy trying to pay the rent. Remember when they tried to pass that law that could get you arrested for walking down State Street with less than five bucks in your pocket? Doesn't seem like such a friendly place once you peel off that sickeningly hypocritical, liberal: bumper sticker facade does it?

In a way, Ann Arbor is a microcosm for what much of this country is becoming. A gated community for the rich (and therefore powerful) where everyone else can be ignored or exploited from a safe distance. An empty hollow shell that consumes everything and produces nothing. Why do you think John Sinclair moved to Amsterdam? It wasn't just for the drugs, I'll bet.

But, the options seem slim when you consider a lifetime of serving falafel to affluent professors and their spoiled kids, obnoxious art fair tourists and even more obnoxious football fans. But, just like this nation as a whole, if

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everyone who is productive and creative leaves, if we just let them have their little playground, their grip will only tighten. So, I think I'll stick around for awhile and see what happens. I'm not sure exactly what I hope to accomplish. I don't have the power to revive industry or create jobs that pay more than minimum wage. But I do still have the power to say something about it (for now). At the very least I can be a thorn in the side of all those _mocha slurping, SUV driving, go blue!: Shouting assholes. The jerk who shouts the truth at them when they accidentally go slumming at the wrong bar. An eyesore in a bright yellow car, here to remind them that the rest of the world has to work for what it gets, cause they sure ain't gonna give it to us wrapped up with a big, red ribbon. And hey, like it says on all those store-bought lawn signs, regime change starts at home.

How do you spell that?

Josh Redd Sanchez

There's something about the feeling of when you're hit over and over in the head and back by a riot cop holding a shield and baton. Something about linked arms in the middle of the street and holding on to two people you don't know. Yelling together, screaming together, holding each other up when it hurts. Reassurance and encouraging whispers yelled over the din of chants, whistles, drums and helicopters. When you start telling jokes in between attacks, at first

just to ease the nervousness and then they just start to flow out. When you can turn to someone and apologize, "I'm sorry" you say. "If they bring the tazer over here, I have to go. I'm scared of that." They admit they're scared too, and understand if you have to run away and leave them to deal with tazers.

And then the cops come at you again, and the man on my left is gritting his teeth in pain and the woman on my right screams and falls to her knees, we pull her up and ask if she's all right and she nods. While I've got a helmet to protect my head and my backpack protects my back nothing protects the people I don't know on either side of me, except a hundred arms linked together. Our grip tightens. And the shields keep slamming again and again into my back and shoulders. And when the cops grab my backpack and start pulling it and me into their line I have to break the chain and fight the cops for my camera, granola bars, and water. The strap on my backpack snaps and I get to keep my stuff. My spot in the chain filled up when I let go but there's a lot more of them than us so I find a new spot next to two more people I don't know.

And here come the cops again trying to push us down the street, and there's us trying to stop them. It reminds me of shows in small spaces with too many people. When everyone's dancing and if your in the front you end up pushing back against the audience to keep them from falling too far forward and trampling the band. Except at shows no one hitting you with plastic shields and batons.

At shows sometimes it's a similar feeling to arms linked in the streets. When everyone's moving and your sweat is all over someone else and theirs is all over you. When exhausted you lean forward on whoever's in front of you, or when you feel someone's hand on your shoulder and you look over and don't even know who they are, but smile or nod anyway.

I think that's the feeling that I live for, that unspoken bond and universal friendship. Like at fests in other cities, when you crash at the punk house with twenty other people. Lying close together to keep warm not knowing who's next to you. That's the kind of community I want.

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But not just at fests and shows, and not just in the streets. I want to invite people to sit at my table with me even if I don't know them. Offer people rides and if I'm drinking, a sip off my 40. Strike up conversations when I see some one at the record store or on the sidewalk.

Chris(tine) who edits the zine Slug and Lettuce once wrote about how she misses the punk nod. I remember that, when I first started dyeing my hair. How I could walk down town and pass another punk I didn't know. We'd make eye contact, nod, and sometimes say hi. We'd acknowledged each other as part of the same community. I miss that too. What happened, how'd we get so self absorbed that we stopped talking to each other as a group? One of the worst things about Americans is how little they see past them selves. They go to a football game and cheer together, then leave and spend an hour honking, yelling and cutting each other off. I don't want that, I want to say hi on the streets. But saying hi, strangely, is something we have to learn and think about. I just keep reminding myself.

-At first I wasn't going to do much of a column, but being in Miami at the F.T.A.A. protest in November got me thinking. Look at FTAAIMC.ORG for more info and a picture of me being hit in the head by a cop.

-this town has really needed more local publications other than Current for a while now. I laugh because as I started to get this one ready to do, two other ones came out. First the Ann Arbor Paper, which is designed for the twenty-something, hip, future yuppies of ann arbor. And the other is called Moment, for the other future yuppies of ann arbor. Ha, I'm kidding, they both have some great articles and both should be read. A2 paper leans more toward entertainment while Moment more toward politics. They're both free. A2 paper is bi-weekly, I'm not sure about moment.

-I'll probably write more on this later, but what the fuck is up with racists in the music scene in this town? There has been nazi graffiti and other such bullshit. Come on guys I wasn't there but I hear the 80's sucked because of those assholes. Kinda seems like maybe we should start being vocal about being non-racist again.

Start saying it out loud so people know where we stand. And don't just let people get away with talking racist shit. Confront them. I'm not saying we need to get all p.c. but let folks know casual racism isn't okay and shouldn't be tolerated. I don't want to have to fight racist crews at shows. Lets stop it before it gets that far. O.K.

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Ann Arbor Paper: 206 S. Main, Ste. 218, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Moment: momentlist@umich.edu

GIVEN TO FITS

An introspective autumn day's quest for self fulfillment

or

Why everybody is so goddamned unhappy

by Jill

An uncomfortable wave of pessimism washes over me as I sit, staring at my toenails in deep contemplation of finding happiness in the face of this ever-changing world. Winter always seems like the right time for retrospect/introspect, the chill of November is sliding under my skin while I turn these concepts over and over in my head, love vs. infatuation, society vs. tribalism, happiness vs. contentment, reality vs. delusions, relationships vs. "relationships". I just can't get a grip on what things equal a healthy balance of emotion and situation. In fact, the more I consider all we have to deal with on our quests for self fulfillment the more everything seems to do nothing but contradict everything else. I am quickly becoming convinced that the key to happiness is a full frontal lobotomy and a life of blissful ignorance. I am left wondering, what is the world coming to? I suddenly feel the need to identify our ineptitude and disillusionment at interacting with one another on a general basis.

People can find contentment in routines or combinations of routines if they are easily amused, ignorant, or have a complete lack of imagination.

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It is instinctive to surround yourself by familiarity and only subject yourself to situations that you know the most likely outcome of, but it's human nature to be curious and rebel against stagnation, to seek the answers to things which we do not yet understand. Our impulses go against our instinct. So if you are a human (as opposed to a person whose soul has been erased by the stigmas and taboos of society) how are you supposed to be satisfied? You desire change and new experience, so everything changes and you find yourself feeling different about everything all the time. How stupid. Everything about being a human is a conflict, those of us who realize this become devastated by it, over stimulated, confused, unable to function in the "real world" and delusional. What is life supposed to be like? Shit, I do not know, but I'm positive it's not supposed to be like this. There is too much, period. Imagine if suddenly every person on the planet became conscious of every emotion and experience of every other person on the planet. I think the body would be incapable of dealing with the effects to the mind and soul, the entire human race would be instantly comatose. What a lovely idea!

As for people with a "daily routine", how can you be satisfied doing the same thing every single day? How can anyone think that one thing or one choice or one person can make them happy for the rest of their life? It's comforting, but it's delusional. Take it upon yourself to be okay with inconstance. Everybody is wrong because nobody knows how anything is actually going to turn out. It really is all up to you to create happiness for yourself and it's your responsibility to know yourself. If one person caters to one major goal in your life but tends to make you miserable until that goal is achieved, do not put your life on hold so you can try to figure out how to make all the ways that person disappoints you not hurt so bad. You cannot change people, you can only influence them and it's up to them to decide whether or not they'll have different opinions or actions because of you. In turn you should only allow yourself to be changed in ways that give you a better perspective on the world around you, not in ways that make you forget about how you enjoyed living your life. Enjoy the shit out of it, it's ultimately yours and no one else's. If there are people who take joy in the same things you do then spend some of it with them. Here are a few handy or maybe not-so-handy observations I've made during miserable situations of mine or my friends that may help those lost in contradiction land.

First, standards schmandards. Every society is different and two thousand years of other peoples'

rules, opinions, silly ideals and ideas about how things are supposed to be don't mean a fucking thing to your sixty-five or so enjoyable years on this planet, unless you should decide to try and change the rules and the ridiculous state of things. Life is a blink of an eye and most people regret only the things they never got to do.

Second, there will always be somebodies that randomly come into your life and make you feel happy when you least expect it. Don't put yourself in a situation that prohibits you from spending time with these people. They usually come at perfect times to remind you that life is unexpectedly beautiful in the smallest ways.

Third, there will never be one person that fulfills every hope and dream of yours who shares exactly the same interests and joys as you who is perfect all the time, so you can't expect it. If somebody comes close, bully for you, but if their one flaw is that they're a jealous ass-hole who doesn't allow you to have close relationships with your friends, it's not worth it. We're predisposed to certain degrees of misery, there's no reason to bring any more upon yourself.

Fourth, and the last of these ridiculous numbered points I am going to make, also the least appealing, the most pessimistic and most arguable... One reason married couples are unhappy is because they inevitably get bored, one way or another. People are so programmed to think they are supposed to spend the rest of their life with one person that they forget the fact that people do, and most likely will, change with time. Sometimes in any relationship it is just time to part ways. The problems with that are that usually both people involved don't feel the same way at the same time, and people get so comfortable with each other that they become complaisant to their unhappiness or dissatisfaction and it is hard to figure out what to do once apart. This is where honesty and communication come in. Be fucking honest, and most importantly be honest to yourself. You can't be completely honest with other people if you've got it in your head that something is going to make you happy even though it really isn't just because you're being neurotic. If this is happening, chances are you're up for some time to yourself, which you should never deny yourself anyway.

Don't set other people's rules for yourself, don't ignore people who bring random but meaningful happiness, don't expect too much from people or situations, but when it's good, appreciate it. Be honest, communicate, and let yourself be selfish at the right moments, but never stop paying attention to the effect you are having on the people around you.

Columns

It really seems that society is on a mission to make us miserable, maybe so we can be convinced to spend millions of dollars on anti-depressants and other treatments for all these bogus psychological disorders that the medical industry has created for us. It's like fire departments setting things ablaze when they get bored just so they have something to do, but instead of putting out a fire, the medical industry is dousing us with mind and emotion-numbing medications and extinguishing our ability to think for ourselves. Don't give in! Don't be afraid to take a step back and realize how ridiculous things are made for us. Our society is filled with misconceived notions about how we are supposed to deal with one another and what it is we're supposed to be doing with ourselves. There is a fair balance, it's just so many of us have gotten thrown off by over stimulation that we're faltering and afraid of ourselves and each other. It's time to open your eyes.

"Of Sunsets, Garages, and the Utility of Meaning"

Santi Holley

There is a daily occurrence in this world we call "sunsets" and "sunrises," though we may not consciously realize the inaccuracy of each term. Thanks to modern science, astrology, reason, and the Internet, we have completely dismissed the fundamentalist, "flat-earth" mentality of centuries-old Christian fanatics, pre-1492 to the present. We, as the most sophisticated and advanced apes (at least until another hundred or so years), look upon them and their ridiculous claims scornfully and humorously, with some thanks to a misguided, Spanish toad and a handful of other amphibians. Nevertheless, we continue to hold onto the tradition of calling the clockwork cycle of our Earth, along with the other, non-important planets rotating around the sun as sunsets and sunrises. Does the insistence on calling this natural, universal action by its medieval origins come from the Religious Right? Perhaps this tradition is held in place by the very same people who insist on continuing to celebrate Christmas every year.

Living where I do, in this town that has its name partially derived from the abundance of vegetation, I couldn't help but feel as if something was lacking from my evenings and rare early mornings. Those that know me on a personal level

(all two of you), know that I was born in this town, but moved to Colorado right before my tenth birthday, and didn't come back until after my seventeenth birthday. I've been here now for five years, which means, in essence, that I am either a local or a Colorado import. In my opinion, people don't matter and therefore don't exist until they are old enough to get other people to buy alcohol for them on their own, in which case I didn't exist until I was well into my fourteenth year. Coincidentally, that was also the year I remember appreciating this thing we call sunsets and sunrises.

In mountainous Colorado, we had our options of how we wanted our sun to look when it either came or went. Standing atop Mesa Verde, we could watch the sun retreat into the distant horizon; or, from ground level, we could admire Old Hannah as she sank into the Rocky Mountain skyline.

Unfortunately, this was one of the only positive attributes Southwest Colorado had going for it. I relocated to Ann Arbor in 1998, after one too many years trying to explain to my peers why I didn't eat red meat for breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner, and why drinking Coors in the Wal-Mart parking lot wasn't my idea of an enjoyable Friday night. When I came here and saw how overwhelmingly green it all was, I could actually feel my throat and chest cavities open up after all that time in the dry, Southwest desert. However, after the novelty of clean, fresh air wore off, I noticed that I had neglected something important and valuable.

As long as I can remember, I have been unusually aware of the strange, mysterious nature of parking garage rooftops, to a point where they became a slight phobia. Here were these monolithic structures placed strategically over the downtown area, where people would drive slowly in circles through their dark, cavernous maze looking desperately for somewhere to store their vehicle. That, in and of itself, was curious; like a low-rent haunted carnival ride, but without (we hoped) the axe-wielding clown waiting behind the next turn. The thing that intrigued me the most, however, was the way in which people would avoid the roofs at any cost, like they had lost the game if they had to park on the top with all the other failures. Now, I do understand that it's a matter of efficiency. People don't like to have to wait an extra three seconds for the elevator to reach the ground. We are all in a hurry and we have no time to walk down one extra flight of stairs. The roof, consequently, is neglected, and our apprehension develops. It is indeed an unusual sensation to drive upwards in the endless abyss of the garage only to be let out onto the roof,

Columns

where everything is suddenly open, spacious, deserted, and quiet. Where it was once loud, claustrophobic, and tight, you now have the feeling of being the only car alive in a kind of B-grade apocalyptic movie, a la "Dead-End Drive-In." It is hard not to feel isolated, apprehensive, and perhaps even go through a sort of existential vertigo (in an exaggerated, worst-case scenario). Alas, my initial journeys to the roof were not to overcome my own misgivings of this enigmatic creature, but to get a better view of the sun's daily descent.

One thing the Midwest is known for is being very flat; one thing Ann Arbor is known for is being covered in a lot of trees. The combination of those two elements makes for a pretty lousy sunset. Old Hannah is well below the timberline before we even begin to see a splash of orange, and there are no hills to speak of to take us as high as need be. When I first made the voyage to the roof, on foot, with no automobile and therefore no motives having to do with needing a place to store my (nonexistent) car, it was primarily to find a quiet, secluded, and sunny place to have a picnic. Granted, it's not exactly the Arb or Gallup Park; there is no grass to speak of and no water (unless you count the mystery puddle by the door), but it is exceptionally more private, and there are no mammoth squirrels fighting you for your pita bread. At any rate, it was about seventhirty or so as I was sitting on the edge of the roof, with my feet dangling merrily and threateningly above the passersby below. I had just finished my hummus and pita sandwich when the sun started its descent well beyond the tree-line, and well into the distant Midwest horizon splashing orange, red, and yellow into the Michigan sky.

"Goddamn," I said aloud to myself. "The sun does set in Michigan after all." This revelation has brought me, subsequently, many more times to the roof; generally by myself, so I can enjoy the solitude of my own concrete kingdom, but occasionally with a friend, so I can share my secret hiding place with those close to me (all two of you). I typically use the stairs as opposed to the elevator, so I can have the feeling of ascending a dangerous mountain, perhaps nostalgic of my Colorado days. Being at the top, one can see nearly all of Ann Arbor in all its dyslexic glory; and looking down amongst the pedestrians on the sidewalk who are unaware of the presence directly above them, it's hard not to develop a Godlike complex, casting your eyes down upon all the minions. My current favorite rooftop belongs to the South Forest garage. It is located right across the street from my place of employment, making it a temporary retreat from work when I

need to take my very periodic break. I can always rely on it to be calm, private, and a great place to take a couple mid-shift shots while trying to find Cassiopeia.

In spite of all of this, I am not attempting to promote the construction or even existence of parking garages. In fact, I feel this town, as would any city, would be largely more attractive without the excess of these colossal, concrete structures, which are, in part, responsible for traffic congestion, urban sprawl, pollution, and choking out the very natural landscape I am attempting to rediscover.

However, they do exist, and they exist for one reason: to park cars. My argument is counteractive, like the Reclaim the Streets movement or the Situationist City, but on a more personal, introspective level, like Jack Kerouac on Desolation Peak. The parking garage rooftop is a beautiful tragedy, waiting for someone to reclaim it, love it, and benefit positively from its existence.

Today, we believe the Earth rotates around the sun because they tell us it does. Years ago, we believed the sun rotated around the Earth because they told us it does. No matter what the sun or the Earth is, in fact, doing; no matter if the world is round, flat, or hexagonal, and the sun is just an enormous, confused firefly, waking in the morning and sleeping at night, parking garages will continue to exist as long as there are more cars than human beings. The challenge is to invent ways we can use these behemoths to our advantage, aside from what they tell us they are or are not designated for.

Santi Holley

Comments or ideas of rooftop uses:
santiholley@yahoo.com

"Instant Pancakes"

Take 1

I always love hearing people complain that there aren't enough shows happening in the area. "The scene is so dead, man!" But, when a show does happen, it seems like a lot of those people stay home and ignore it. When you see a flyer for a show, let other people know. Even if you can't make it to that show, spread the word. Pass flyers on to people you think might be interested.

Columns

Also, create your own shows! If you hate going to bars and clubs to see shows, do something about it. If you can do a show at your house, give it a try. Buy a generator and rock the outside. Every other person is in a band these days (or two, or three...), so ask them to play. Hell, start your own band. This works, I swear.

Music makes everyday better, pass it around.

Take 2

January 1997.

It was about three in the morning when Anne called me. She had gotten a call that Scott was overdosing on heroin. I picked Anne up and we headed over to Scott and Jenny's apartment. Jenny was there crying and Scott was laying on a mattress, barely conscious shaking. We sat him up and tried to get him to talk to us but he was fading out. Anne and I picked Scott up and dragged him outside. It was about 15 degrees outside and Scott was wearing nothing but underwear. I laid him in the snow to wake him up. He started screaming and telling us to leave him alone. He kept telling us to fuck off and he hated us. We wouldn't let him go back inside until he calmed down. A little while later all of us were back inside the apartment. Scott was more attentive and finally agreed to drink some water. He still refused to go to the hospital. We stayed until it was almost morning. Scott swore he would never do heroin again.

December 2003

Unfortunately, it wasn't true. He died a few years later from an overdose. Jenny, who was pregnant with their child at the time has moved on and is raising their daughter. I haven't seen her in a number of years. Anne has gone her own way also. Hopefully, to a happier life. I'm back where it happened after leaving for a few years. Everyday I walk around Ann Arbor I see things that remind me of Scott, bad and good memories. He was my bandmate, but more than that, my friend. I still miss him.

*"sometimes I think about the days
that you were by my side
now I understand
that no one lives forever"*

*now I understand
that people die"* lyrics by Scott doerr

Take 3

Things you should check out:

"Alec: How To Be an Artist" by Eddie Campbell (www.eddiecampbellcomics.com)

"Broad Appeal: An Anthology of Comics for Everyone" (www.friends-lulu.org)

"40 oz. Collected" by Jim Mahfood (www.40ozcomics.com)

also

Runaways (Tsunami/Marvel), **Laughter of the Damned** (AAAMilwaukee), **Demo** (AIT/PlanetLar) and **Heaven's Devil's** (Image).

And don't forget to get your **Slingshot 2004** organizer (www.tao.ca/~slingshot)

Sorry for being sad again.

Luv,

Nate

You can reach me at:

minivansarepunk@yahoo.com

www.clipheartpress.com

P.S. thanks to Val for the copy of the **Ramones Pleasant Dreams** for my birthday.

Review of the Scars

Preston Woodward

It was a November evening, I recall, and I found my self at the Blind Pig amidst thronging hipsters. I was there to see a band called "the Stars", which seemed like a really cool name for some reason. Sean Carroll had told me it was Ron Asheton's ex-girlfriend Dara's band. If any of Ron's brilliant stardust had rubbed off on his woman, it would have to be a cool show. It turned out they are called "the Scars," which was a let down at first. But somehow now, writing about that night a month later, the name works. Like any memorable rock show, that night left a scar on my mind, the

Columns

indelible record of something that cut into you and made you feel pain. The fact that Dara delivered the compelling impression of inner agony, and made it real even in the snake pit of rock ambition that is the Pig, meant something to me and posted that night in the dim-lit little gallery of memorable concerts that hides in one corner of my mind. Dara stood there in her leather coat, wearing a big hollow-body Gibson, and never smiled. She was otherworldly, detached almost, like a soldier. Her music thundered through a cranked bass guitar, against a backdrop of way distorted guitar that she played totally unmetaculously, while seeming to listen carefully to the dire affect it created. Some guy played organ. The songs were impassive, uncompromisingly loud, slow, and hypnotic. When I spoke with Dara afterward, she seemed like the kind of person that worries, but at the same time expresses her anxiety artistically almost by reflex, and is humble and polite about it, concerned more that it happen and get heard than about some long-term goal. The only complaint I heard was that the Scars' set was not very long. Punk is short-lived. When they quit, the spell was broken, and we returned abruptly to the reality of a teaming cooler-than-thou crowd. But all the 60's haircuts, rocker boots, and vintage guitars added up to something much less punk and cool than that distant expression on Dara's face as she tore a hole in your heart.



Good Advice, Bad Advice

An advice Column

Dear G&B,

We're trying to start an advice column for our new magazine, but we can't figure out how to express to readers how it works. It's called Good Advice/Bad Advice. Also we don't have any letters to respond to yet. Where do we start?

Signed,

Needy advice columnist

Good Advice:

Dear Needy advice columnist,
Sounds like a good idea. I hope yer up to the work. I guess you should just tell the readers about it in your magazine. Hopefully someone will find it that needs advice. Make sure you tell them to be anonymous, and that sometimes no advice is better than your advice. You can't be right all the time. The good/bad thing is my favorite part, getting some perspective on ones problems gets people one step closer to solving them.

Good luck.

-G

Bad Advice

Dear N.A.C.

to tell them in a loud voice, "You want advice? I'll give you advice!" Then ram your head repeatedly into the nearest wall. Also hand them a card with your contact information on it. Or you could dress up like a religious person and hand out what people think are bibles. Really it would be an advertisement for the ultimate wisdom you'll give them if they write you with their problems. If all this fails, ask your friends if they'll write you false problems so your column will, at the least, survive.

Sincerely,

-BA

Please send your advice questions to:

Bad Ideas/C/O Good Advice/ Bad Advice
807 N. Main
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

IM TIRED OF PAYING
TOO MUCH AT SECOND
RATE SHOPS FOR
CHEAP CRAP.

AND THE EMPLOYEES
ARE SO RUDE-I REALLY
FEEL LIKE IM BEING
TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

WELL YOU KNOW WHAT BUDDY?
YOU DONT HAVE TO PUT UP
WITH THAT CRAP ANYMORE!

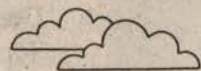


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BRICK/MORTAR

story/illustration by nate

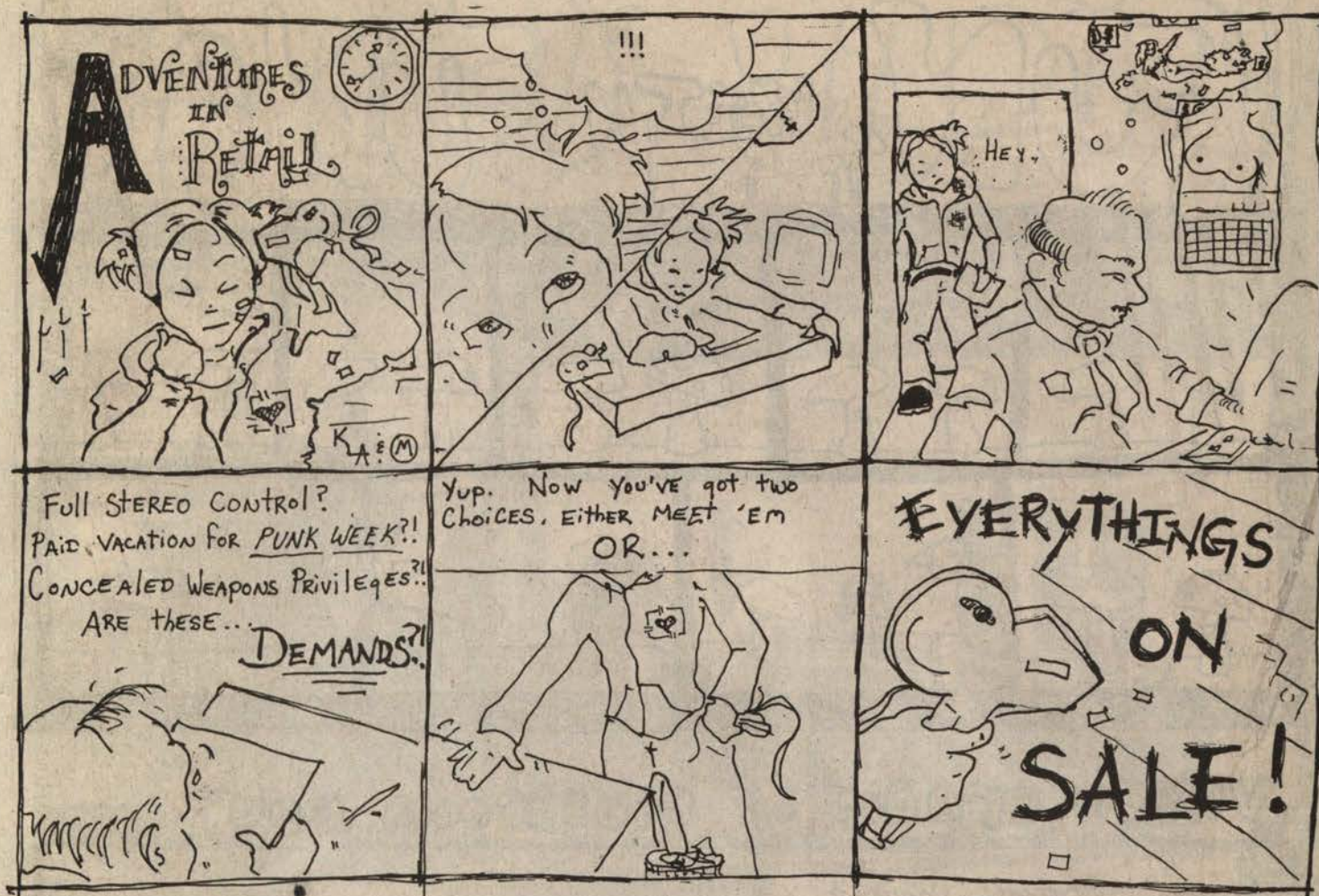
another night under the blur
of street lights and stars
becomes a morning full of hangovers,
numb toes and blaring horns around
every corner. a maze of people wander
the streets while cabs and moving vans
fight the inflow of traffic from the
suburbs into this cavern of brick and mortar.

breakfast sounds good. what
do you know? my favorite.

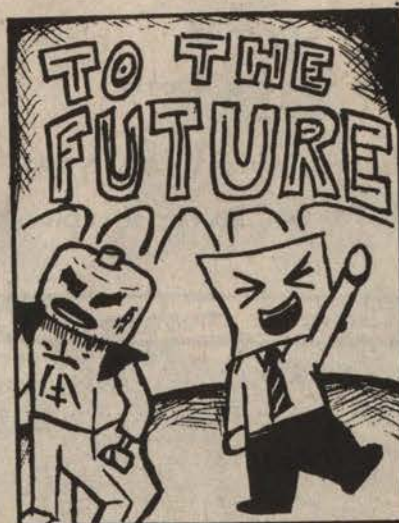
the modern day ration. pizza
crust and a smoke. nothing
says good morning like a
half-smoked red and
a stale piece of crust
with half a piece of
pepperoni.

sit. stand.
sit. stand.
the hours tend to
blur sometimes.
you got a smoke?
some extra change?
a miracle?

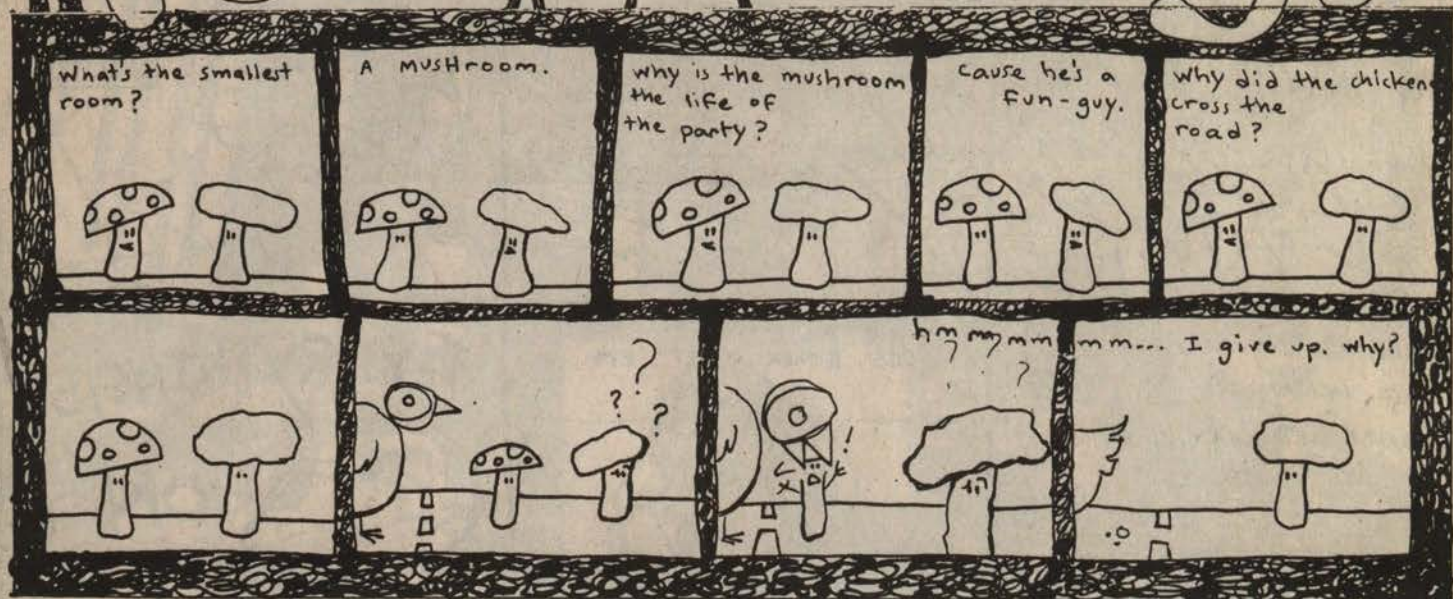
next thing you know the sun has
snuck away again. the moon has
clocked in for its nightly shift.
stand and watch the world go by.
stand and blend in. pretty soon
people stop seeing you there.
you're like a piece of graffiti.
just another tag. just another
piece of that old brick wall.



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FUN WITH FUNG!



vegan cream of mushroom soup

- 6 cups mushrooms, chopped (about 2 cartons)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced

SAUTÉ in olive oil til... sautéed.

- 1 cup soy milk
- 1 cup veggie broth

BLEND $\frac{1}{2}$ of above with milk and broth in a blender.

- 3-5 tbs nutritional yeast
- salt, pepper, favorite spices

HEAT everything together in a pot and stir in powdered stuff to taste. For thicker texture, add 2 tbs cornstarch.

...more mushhoomor

brought to you by

sasha "ilovesoup" wright



BAND PHOTOS



Versificators

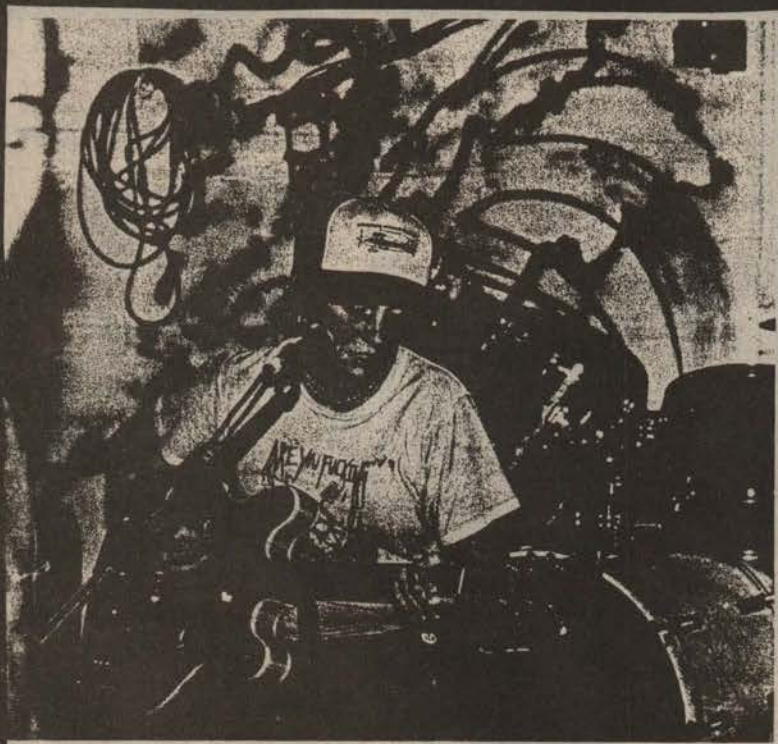


Dec
03
the
Bad
idea
"Bath
room"





Shi-Nei
the Bad Idea
Oct 26 03'



← Danica
6 Pert Net
Spring 03'

Trabajar

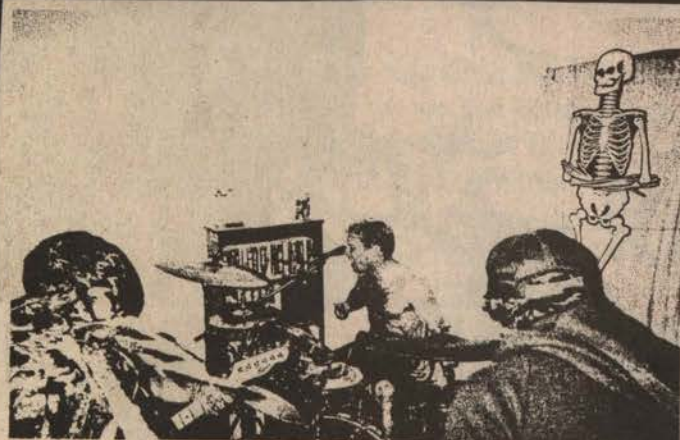


the space in K-Zoo
Winter 03'





Säh
Perpetua
Pizza
Spring
2001
01-
2002



Sexy-Bad idea Oct. 26 03'



Onion
flavored
Rings



↑
The
Bad
Idea
Oct 26
2003



Send us
band photos-
we won't
return them
so send copies
if you want
Keep yours



McQueen
or
Axis of Evil
State Control
?
02-03

Borders Book Strike

Beth Nagalski

If you live in Ann Arbor, you have surely noticed the workers of Borders on the corner of Liberty and Maynard striking since the eighth of November. The sight of picketing workers out in front of a retail chain, in a posh downtown environment, has drawn mixed reactions from community members. Many people seem to be having trouble understanding what Borders workers have to complain about. Arguments such as: "They make the same as other retail workers," "If they want a better job, they should get an education," or "Borders can't afford to pay their employees more!" abound. The inability of people to see the larger picture behind the Borders strike, combined with the spread of rumors such as: "They're asking for \$15 an hour for all employees, and that's just not reasonable!", might help explain why every time you walk by Borders you still see it packed with shoppers.

First off, it should be made clear the Borders workers are not asking for any unreasonable compensation. They are asking for a starting wage of \$7.95/hr, increasing to \$9.95/hr after two years of employment (they make \$6.50-\$7.00 to start now). They have asked for \$10/hr for supervisors, and an annual increase in salary of 4.5%. Sound unreasonable? Now consider that a Borders CEO makes over \$586/hr base pay before bonuses and stock options. Change your mind? Considering that Borders made \$106,000,000 in profits in 2002, it seems unlikely that they are unable to pay their employees a fair wage.

Many people argue that since Borders pays a comparable wage to other retail chains the employees are just being greedy, asking for more than average. The point however, is that whether Borders employees are paid similarly to other retail employees or not shouldn't matter -- if that amount isn't a living wage, it isn't enough. Every human being deserves to work in a respectful work environment, with enough compensation to live on -- *including* the workers at the other retail chains referred to.

This is precisely the "larger picture" that many people seem to be missing. Indeed, what Borders workers are doing is truly progressive, in that they are trying to force Borders to set a precedent for higher standards in labor practice for the retail industry at large. Considering the fact that Borders (especially the Ann Arbor location) pretends to be a "progressive" corporation, they should be jumping at the opportunity to start this trend. After all, their website boasts "Our employees know how valuable they are, because we make sure to tell them."

With rent in Ann Arbor as high as it is, it seems almost impossible for a person making \$6.50/hr to live in the city that they work. One girl's response to this was: "They should move then." The implications sort of ignorant statement is disturbing. People want someone to serve them their food, sell them their expensive consumerist goods, and clean up after them -- they just don't want them to try and live in the same town as them. The same girl also said that there were plenty of other people who would love to work at Borders. Just because there is a high demand for employment in low-wage jobs (only indicative of a larger

problem), does that mean that the employer should have the right to treat employees unfairly? It is this same train of logic that says it is okay to have workers in exploited countries working in sweatshops owned by multi-national corporations. After all, isn't the demand for those shitty jobs high as well?

Other people have made statements such as: "That's just the way the world is," or "That's the nature of capitalism." While this may be true, it is sad to think that there are so many people who are just willing to let it go at that. I give props to the workers at Borders for standing up and letting their employer know that they are not willing to tolerate poor treatment. It is unfortunate that the stores unionize on a store to store basis (there is only one other unionized store in the U.S.), limiting the employees impact, but their voices are definitely being heard. Hopefully Borders will realize the positive social implications that working with the union could have, and make the right decision the next time the workers meet for negotiations. Until then, next time you walk by Borders, at the very least don't cross the picket lines, but also consider picking up a sign and walking in solidarity with the workers, realizing that you are doing so not only to support higher wages for them, but for a larger cause at the same time.

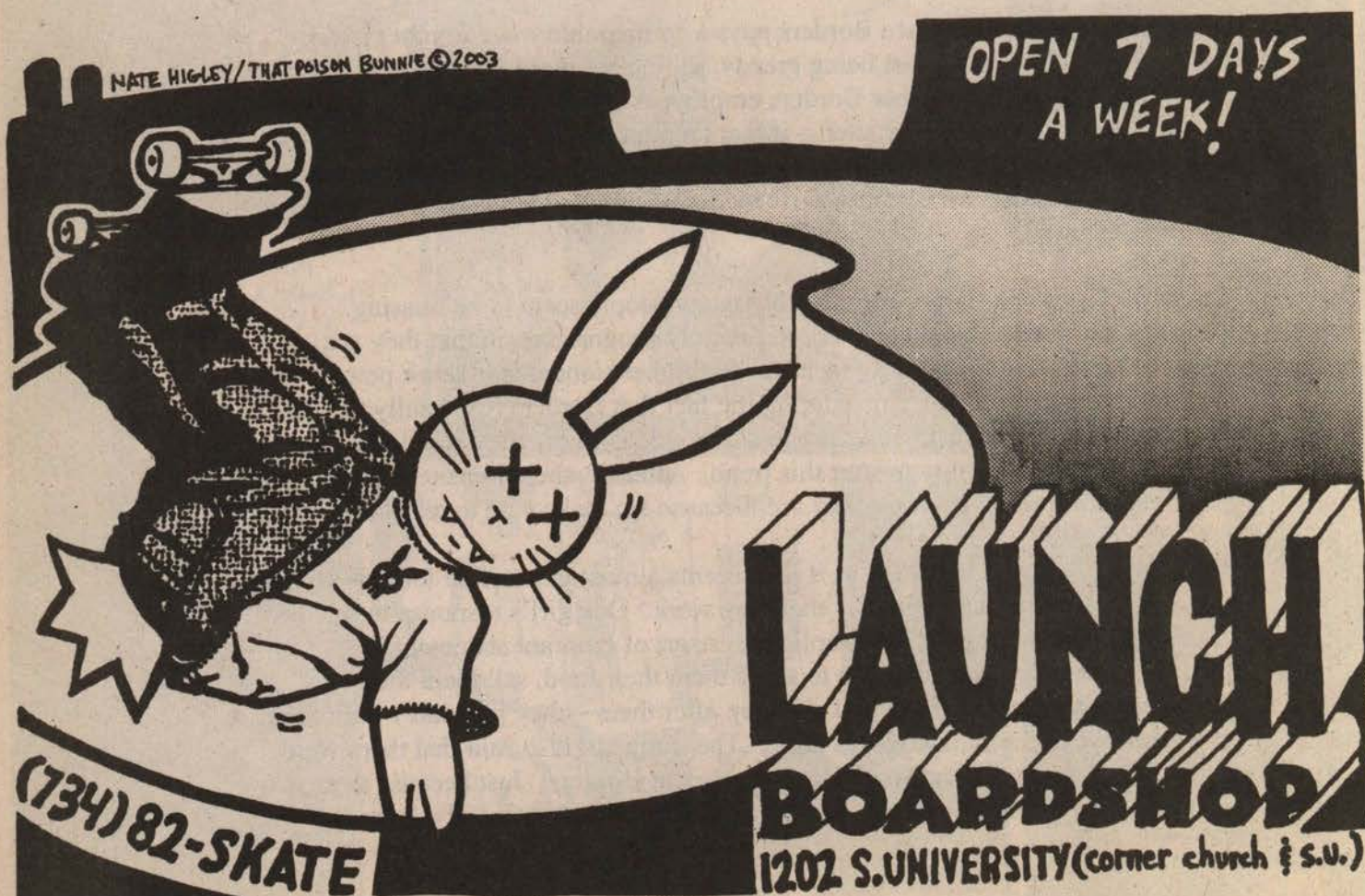
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The Hidden Victory of Miami

Max Sussman

We lost the battle of the streets in Miami. The fence stayed up, the meetings went on as scheduled, the police beat us up, the city violated our Constitutional rights.

The Direct Action plan failed. The Padded Bloc and Black Bloc members were scattered and arrested. The decision to converge at 7AM instead of encouraging smaller, autonomous actions made it easy for the police to surround and contain those intent on carrying out direct action.

Because of all this, there was a diminished presence of Black Bloc members at Flagler and Biscayne, where the fence was supposed to be taken down. The rest of the protesters, mostly there to provide support for the direct action contingent, were confused and left without a concrete action plan. When the police started advancing, there were few people on the streets willing to hold the line. The police could cite the threat of "Seattle-type anarchists" to justify their excessive use of force against us - even though there was almost no militant direct action!

So, the battle of the streets was lost. People came back to the Welcome Center feeling defeated, with friends in jail or the hospital.

But in losing this battle, we unknowingly began to win a different one: for the support of the hearts and minds of the citizens of Miami.

The brutal tactics employed by Miami police in the face of a largely non-threatening group of people exercising their First Amendment rights has set off a wave of criticism, lawsuits, and investigations: from the AFL-CIO, Miami Activist Defense, United Steelworkers, Amnesty International, ACLU, and the National Lawyers Guild.

The tide of media coverage has turned as well, thanks largely to an unprecedented amount of outreach done to the mainstream media. One article in the Miami Herald published after the protests read, "The anarchists won . . . Their goal was to equate the free-trade talks with repression. And we obliged them by turning downtown into an armed camp with 3,000 cops in riot gear." In large part, because of the failure to have a successful direct action that shut down the FTAA trade talks, we emerge as winners. Victimized, but victorious.

The movement for Global Justice may have won a more long-term goal by failing in the streets than could have ever been accomplished by any success in tearing down the fence.

And so we have to begin to question our goals and tactics.

In Miami the Black Bloc did not work as an effective direct action tactic. It did, however, incite police violence, whose blowback is now creating sympathy for radical activists among NGOs, unions, and the mainstream media. This is an unforeseen and positive development, and

should make global justice activists in the US consider what is the most effective use of our resources and energy.

Many Miami citizens were radicalized by the creation of an unwarranted police state in their city during the FTAA meetings. As one Miami citizen exclaimed in an interview, "Have you ever seen anything like this before? Not in my city - this is ridiculous." The first meeting of the Miami Independent Media Center took place the weekend immediately following the protests, and over 25 people showed up. This sort of turnout would not have been possible without the repression experienced by these residents during the weeks leading up to the protests.

Besides gaining sympathy with the citizens of Miami, the failure in the streets opened up new possibilities for building ties with other potential allies in the US. A remarkable number of mainstream organizations have come out in support of the activists brutalized on the streets and in the prisons of Miami. Organizations like Amnesty International and the AFL-CIO are able to offer their support only because there was no illegal direct action that took place. In any type of political organizing, it is important to consider how actions affect the possibility of gaining support from potential allies. Nowhere should that lesson be clearer than after Miami.

If the Black Bloc had been successful, the police violence, while still totally indefensible, would have been excused or even praised by the media, and ignored by other mainstream organizations. Because the direct action never materialized, we are faced with a unique set of circumstances from which we can learn a great deal.

It's worth it to at least explore the possibility that we gained more ground as a movement during the Miami actions by not engaging in a large-scale direct action. An attack on the fence would have been a powerful symbol of resistance against the FTAA and all it represents, but would have alienated most of the Miami community. It would also have given the mainstream media the excuse they needed to justify police violence. Instead, citizens of Miami are more sympathetic to the concerns of the protesters, more critical of the police state that was created, and consequently more ready to organize to create radical change in their own community.

For many first-time participants in a large anti-capitalist convergence, for fence-sitting consumers of the mainstream media, and for the people of Miami, the violent nature of the State was revealed for the first time. The radicalizing effect of witnessing the police violence in Miami cannot be overestimated.

In a more immediate benefit, Miami Police Chief John Timoney, who will be a consultant for the DNC "security" in Boston this summer, and his traveling police state are facing harsh criticism on several fronts.

The US is clearly moving away from pursuing large multilateral trade agreements or institutions like the WTO. In many ways, the FTAA was

intended to be a smaller-scale, more manageable version of the WTO. And since the FTAA has begun to run into roadblocks, the US is working even harder on even smaller agreements like CAFTA and other bilateral trade agreements, like those signed between the US and Chile.

If this model continues, and we can expect it to do so, the opportunities to engage in direct action against institutions like the FTAA and the WTO will be increasingly infrequent and fragmented. Future resistance to neo-liberalism will have to be in the form of long-term organizing done in solidarity with people's movements already working in those countries most affected by US trade policies.

All this is not to say that anti-capitalist direct action is a played-out tactic in the US. To have concrete positive effects, however, it must be done creatively and thoughtfully, and more importantly, in concert with sympathetic movements in countries in the Global South.

In retrospect, we could, instead of following the single target direct action approach, embrace the model of creating working versions of the communities we are fighting for. In a possible model for future convergences in the US, we can imagine the following: Recognize that our mass mobilizations will be met with increasingly repressive police state tactics, making them less and less hospitable environments for direct actions.

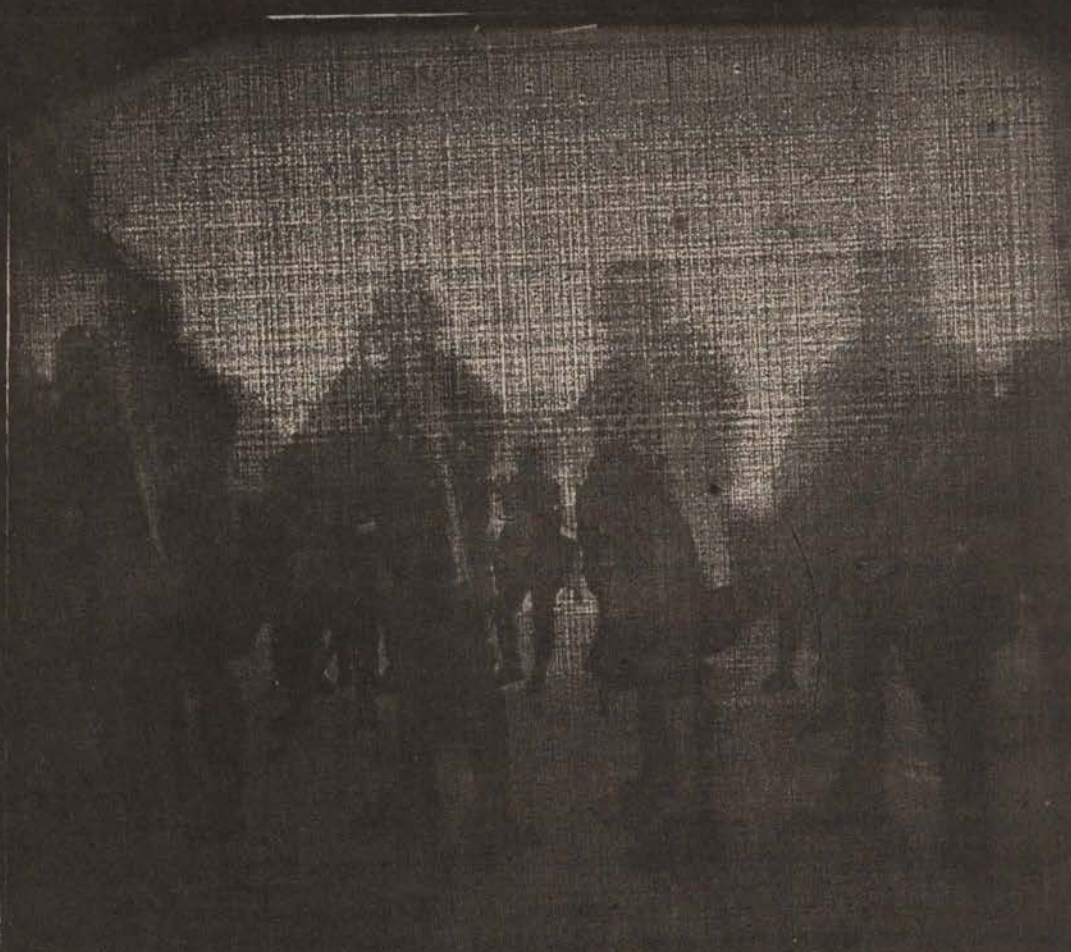
Instead of encouraging police violence by engaging, or publicly declaring the intent to engage, in militant direct action, we could create a temporary autonomous community that celebrates and builds our cultures of resistance. This event could take the form of cultural events: music, dance, and other forms of expression from both the US and affected communities in the Global South.

Organizers could focus on creating an amazing Convergence Center that offers free food and information, and that is a welcoming, open place for whatever community we have imposed ourselves upon. We should participate in the permitted events, but add our creativity and artistic interpretations, making our presence known and felt in a powerful way by our allies and the mainstream media. And we should hold workshops on direct action skills and theory, so people can go back to their communities and engage in direct action without the presence of a militarized police force.

From Miami we have gained a new experience, which we should not discount. Dissent in the US is being criminalized in a rapid and dangerous way, and as activists engaged in the fight for global justice, we have a responsibility to respond creatively to these circumstances.

It was a November evening, I recall, and I found my self at the Blind Pig amidst thronging hipsters. I was there to see a band called "the Stars", which seemed like a really cool name for some reason. Sean Carroll had told me it was Ron Asheton's ex-girlfriend Dara's band. If any of Ron's brilliant stardust had rubbed off on his woman, it would have to be a cool show. It turned out they are called "the Scars," which was a let down at first. But somehow now, writing about that night a month later, the name works. Like any memorable rock show, that night left a scar on my mind, the indelible record of something that cut into you and made you feel pain. The fact that Dara delivered the compelling impression of inner agony, and made it real even in the snake pit of rock ambition that is the Pig, meant something to me and posted that night in the dim-lit little gallery of memorable concerts that hides in one corner of my mind. Dara stood there in her leather coat, wearing a big hollow-body Gibson, and never smiled. She was otherworldly, detached almost, like a soldier. Her music thundered through a cranked bass guitar, against a backdrop of way distorted guitar that she played totally un-meticulously, while seeming to listen carefully to the dire affect it created. Some guy played organ. The songs were impassive, uncompromisingly loud, slow, and hypnotic. When I spoke with Dara afterward, she seemed like the kind of person that worries, but at the same time expresses her anxiety artistically almost by reflex, and is humble and polite about it, concerned more that it happen and get heard than about some long-term goal. The only complaint I heard was that the Scars' set was not very long. Punk is short-lived. When they quit, the spell was broken, and we returned abruptly to the reality of a teeming cooler-than-thou crowd. But all the 60's haircuts, rocker boots, and vintage guitars added up to something much less punk and cool than that distant expression on Dara's face as she tore a hole in your heart.

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NOV 20th 2003

Punk in Midwinter

Cr **A** sh

December 27, 2003

3:40 p.m. on the greyhound heading home. Home being my home for the moment; Ann Arbor. I'm coming from my first home; my home town, Grand ledge Michigan. I am well fed, well rested, got some money, some new tools, and a box of Florida citrus (thanx pop).

I watch people. As punk as I may be, I'll always feel like a part of my species, and I look around at them and marvel, or feel ill; often time both. This time of year finds me traveling; along with a lot of my fellows, near and anonymous. Everyone red eyed and pissed off. People three rows up cursing our driver in heated whispers. Amish kids sitting with 'hood rats--- I love this shit.

Thanksgiving, then Hanukkah, then X-mas and the New Year. Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, Whatever your deal, you're trying to get with yours. In the scene we've got Punk Rock Dinner and the anniversary of Family Values. 'Tis the season for waking to find friends now living in My in my living room; for running into friends who stay in Oregon at random on Familiar streets.

Nothings free though. \$30+ round trip for me, long lines trying to get your multi tool past security check points. The projects and people put on hold and left behind. Lets face it, getting from here to there once while scheduling time off w/work and transportation with my mom I said to myself; "Fuck it! To much hassle- I won't go". But I went. Why? And was it worth it?

Tradition. In a word. I know it sounds very un-punk, and it sure as hell can be. Tradition is a slippery slope; the very things we count on can hold us back. Tradition can become the catch all excuse for a whole load of bullshit, "...because it's tradition!". Tradition can also reinforce that cliquishness we all know and love, alienating people who aren't aware of the norms.

Christmas at my moms house means her fussing about everything. Over reacting and demanding. Sleeping on her couch, watching my brothers porn collection to pass away the sleepless nights. The more years that go by, the harder it is to see old friends. My moms house is terminally messy; I sliced my foot on a glass a cat broke, blah, bitch, blah, bitch.

Tradition is also home, old streets, skate spots. My moms mashed yams w/ walnuts + molasses. She taught me her stuffing recipe (from scratch mother fucker!) this year. All the phone calls to and from relatives in NY and Florida; what they're up to, whose sick, whose well. All that gossipy well-wishing. It happens with the punk scene too. Everyone checks out what people are (or aren't) wearing to punk rock dinner. Stenciled X-mas cards. Kids who've moved away spending 8+ hours in the fleet wood just because they can again.

In the NOFX song "the Cause" there's the line:

"Traditional Neglect

"Reflect on how it makes you feel".

While some, maybe most traditions can be stifling; Some make me feel great, amazing even. Tradition can be used as a dynamic, accelerating force in our lives, because we can make them ourselves.

Traditions make up our culture. They are a reference point in common we can move towards or away from. They can be a rallying point we can use to remember, to refresh, to comfort.

Is it worth it? I think so. But it really depends on us, the participants. When traditions exist in a vacuum they get stale, like a department store Santa. For traditions to stay relevant they need to be maintained.

This is the preachy part where I bitch about the scene but bear with me. Traditions are fine this time of year when everyone comes around, expecting events and good times, but what happens the rest of the year, especially in the depths of February, when all the old friends have gone back to their new towns and we're left with the same old faces, the same old drama. It feels like you're the only one down for what ever, that everyone else is too wrapped up in their stuff to even give a kind word. Traditions can give a kind of "unity for now" feeling that I think is really harmful. For two reasons. It weakens the scene right now, pissing people off and slowing projects down. Second, it makes it that much harder for someone to start up something new in the future.

People came and go, lives change direction. We've shown a love for adventure, travel, and each other. I think when we're in a spot, we owe ourselves to not just preserve our traditions once a year, but to make new ones where we are; Find kinds who want to fuck shit up and consistently, regularly, go out and do it! If you've been someplace for a while, be active during the "slow" times, have a dinner, get people to go sledding, welcome the new kids as the old kids move on and away. Keep the old traditions, make new ones.

Family, Familiar, Same root, the Latin "Familia" meaning servant of the house hold. The world is my house. Sometimes I need something to remind me that we're supposed to help each other. All times of the year, parties, shows, projects, can make us all more familiar which makes us better. Rock 'n' Roll is better than T.V.

Josh Redd's

Winter tour of Ann Arbor -

Winter 03-04

eh, I walk around alot. All year round cuz I like the place I live. I enjoy the little paths + bridges and it's alot more fun than watching another fucking movie. Too many times I mention a bridge or path or park and find out no one knows what I'm talking about. I've taken people on walking tours, but below is a self guided tour. Take it, enjoy yourself, or don't and go watch T.V.

*- I like to get coffee before I go, so I start at the Fleetwood, but you could leave from any place around downtown. Dress warm cuz it's cold and if you're drinking I suggest taking whiskey or wine cuz it's just too cold for beer. You don't need to drink though, a thermos of something warm. You can take this walk anytime day or night. I like the night cuz you have the whole town to your self. In the day you can stop at cafes + get something warm to drink or just warm up. It's best in the snow or best when it's snowing. I walked it slowly + got done in one hour + 45 mins. Oh.. and please don't get arrested on the walk + give the cops this zine. Also.. I hid three pints of crappy whiskey on the way. You probably won't find it, but you could get lucky.

- Head to the Ann Arbor-Toledo rail road tracks. They are the ones on the west side of downtown cutting North-South + run kinda parallel to Main st. They swing past the Fleetwood and then over a few bridges across Washington, Huron, Miller, and Felch st. Walking from downtown take a right when you get to them. You're now headed north. Keep an eye out for good graffiti on the bridges, and the streets below you covered in snow is pretty cool. Especially Huron cuz you can see up the hill (west) all the way past 7th street.

- Keep walking till you get to the bridge, now some people want to cross it, when it's dark and covered in snow. But stay in the center + you'll be alright. Between 1am + 3am are when the train comes. South bound is about a hour after the north bound train and most days these are the only two so if you see them your safe but keep your ears open. You can jump into the river safely but, it's winter + you'll freeze. Or get off the tracks onto Main st. Walk underneath the bridge to the river look to your right and you can see the argo

dam. Which you can walk over. (this bridge is the finish line to the Ann Arbor hot Rod shopping cart race every august and was where the cover photo for the Q to 60 in 73 bonds comp. was shot) Cross the river.

- Now your over the river. If your on the tracks go right as soon as you clear the bridge. When you get down to the ground right under the bridge look around, there's an interesting mural behind you. Straight up, underneath the train bridge but on the inside some guy used spray paint to confess his love to a girl he liked. I always wonder what the story is to that. Was he heart broken and longing, publicly announcing his defeat. But not too publicly. Or did he take her for a quite walk along the river, only to stop under the bridge and point up, then kiss and fuck right there in the path.

Look to one side and you'll see the argo canoe rental. Look the other way and there's a concrete bridge over the over-flow canal. If it's been cold you can walk on the ice. Throw some rocks to test it first. Anyway, walk in that direction over the bridge. When you get over follow the trail to the left away from the dam. If you've just walked over the dam take that trail but from where you are it's on your right.

- Follow the path for a while. On your left will be the "alga slide". It's where the over-flow canal goes back to the river. ~~It was a fun~~ It was a fun place to go in the summer. It's a concrete ramp covered in algae that you could slide down. Some kid probably broke his foot + told his parents, then the city put bars across the slide so now you can't slide. After the slide is the power plant. There are three ways you could go. Right leads down to the river on this staircase that doesn't go anywhere, but is a good launching dock for home made rafts. Left leads to the streets. Inbetween takes you around the back of the power plant. Go that way. There is construction going on that way and a fence or two but go

Ann Arbor Winter tour

- over or around them. You get to a bridge. It's the Broadway bridge under construction. Hop the fences & walk under the bridge to the other side. Keep walking through the construction and you'll hit a paved path that follows the river.
- Keep walking. The river's on your right on your left will be a city's utility building where you could steal industrial electric cable if you wanted. After that is a park that was the sight of the failed punk rock picnic in 1994. There was a huge dead hollow tree in the sand box there but it's gone now. Follow this path till you come to a road. It's Maiden Lane.
 - Go straight across Maiden Lane to the street Island dr. Keep walking. On the left is some of Ann Arbor cheapest living. But it's not too cheap. Some where around here you cross one of Ann Arbor's rare exposed creeks. When you get to a foot bridge going over the river on your right hand side, take it you are now on Island park.
 - On your right you can see this white building, it's a nice place to sit and watch the river. There's no electricity so you have to have a generator if you want to throw an illegal show. After you've done looking at the building go left down the path. Eventually there is another foot bridge going from the Island to the other side of the river on the right. Go across that and you're in the soccer fields of Fuller Park.
 - As well as soccer fields Fuller park has a sweat play ground and a public pool with a big water slide and very little security at night, in the summer. As you come off the bridge you can see the pool barely dead ahead but a bit to your right and in front of that is Fuller rd. Walk toward Fuller. When you get there cross the street & turn left. Follow Fuller back over the river, and on your right is more soccer fields. Stop & look at the park. On the far right hand corner behind a batting cage is a hole in the fence. You can't see it until you get there, but it's there. It's one of the "Peoples paths". The city keeps fixing the hole and doctors & joggers keep tearing it down. Behind the hole is a well worn path that leads to the tracks.
 - Once on the tracks, go right across the river (again) look down at the end of the bridge on your right side. there is a cool mural there painted the summer of '95. At one time off to the right of the tracks there was some woods and in the woods was an abandoned building. The building had been painted and decorated with old records and dolls by the old A² band "Scream" and friends. One day my band Blue Onions went to do some painting there and we ran into some guy with a lot of hair painting the side of the bridge support. The city turned the woods & the building into a parking lot but the hairy guys mural is still there.
 - Directly after the bridge is a path on the left that leads to one of the hospital parking lots. follow that. On the far side of the lot is a really huge staircase. Go up the stairs. On your right is the Helicopter landing pad. If your lucky or patient you can see one take off. It's cool to see but sad because it means someone is hurt really bad some where. When it's warm you can jump the fence & hide in the bushes inside the landing pad & wait for one to go. Finish walking up the stairs & turn around. It's kinda pretty huh. You should be able to see the north campus bell tower where they forgot to put a clock on.
 - You're now on Medical Center dr. Turn to look at the hospital. A little to the right is the emergency room in case you have frost bite or hypothermia. On the left you can see a parking structure. There is a big lit up sign on the top of the nearest one that says "Parking for Anarchists." Don't go in the entrance of that, go into the next entrance a little farther up the hill. (It will be the second set of gates if you don't see the sign and just start walking to your left.) Go in and head as far away from the street as you can. There should be a tunnel for cars that curves so you can't see the end. Go in there it's not very long, but it's well lit and yellow and feels like it should be in a sci-fi movie. The tunnel pops out right in front of Mott's Childrens Hospital. Go right.
 - Walk along the side of the hospital for a while. As of December 2003 you run into a chain link fence blocking off a construction zone. Normally you cut diagonally across this parking lot then walk a paved path that leads up to the corner of Zina Pitcher and Catherine. You can't do that now so here's two other routes. ① follow the fence to the left when it ends turn directly right into this parking lot. You will see a building in front of you. On the right side of the building are some dangerous stairs. Go up them. Then turn right down the street, it curves left but follow it till you hit Zina Pitcher, go right till Catherine then go left. ② go this way if you want to jump on roofs & climb shit, and if it's dark out. At the fence go right follow it till you run into the gate. It's locked but you can squeeze through it. Now you're in a parking lot walk a bit then look forward & left of you. there is a few pine trees near the corner of the fence. Go to them. Behind them is one of those orange plastic fences. Go over it. Now look ahead, there's a space to walk between two buildings. Walk down this space & it opens up after a few yards into this space with industrial fans & doors & some other stuff. Behind you & to your left is building with a low roof you can climb up on. Once on top there is a pole you can use to climb up on a second roof. Now that you're on the second one walk forward till you reach the edge. looking down you can see the space between the building that you just walked down. Now in front of you is another roof, level with the one you're on. You are going to have to jump to that one. It's about a four foot jump. I did it on ice & it was easy. Just be careful because it's winter & you don't want to lose your footing. Once you jump go left. You hit a ladder to another roof, go up. Pretty soon you have to jump down a few feet on the left to a lower roof. Then a big jump down on your right. the last big jump looks worse than it is. After that you're back on ground level. look ahead you can see shrubs. Walk toward them, then over them then turn right on the street you're now on which is Zina Pitcher follow that to Catherine then turn left.
 - Now you're walking down Catherine toward town (west) about halfway down the block on your right is a plastic clear tunnel. Go in there.

Ann Arbor Winter tour

if it's day you can stop a Angelo's and get some coffee + really good bread it's on the left at the corner of Catherine + Glen. After that go back to the tunnel, follow it over Glen and into a parking structure. Keep walking to the other side of the structure, the tunnel keeps going. At night the other side is locked but during the day you can walk into the Dental building. But for now don't go into the tunnel at all, go down the stairs until you get to the ground level then come out inside the parking structure + turn left away from the street until you get to some more doors on your left. Go through the doors then to the outside then turn right. Walk about 20 feet then stop. ① on your left are some stairs, sometimes they're locked. If they are follow ② if not go up them. At the top turn right you should see a fenced in play ground walk around it + you end up on a street turn left... ③ go straight you're forced to turn right-ish down this fat path. The path dead ends + you can go down this hill on the right or go left. Go left you come out on this street + you can see the playground on your left. Keep walking down the street.

There is a parking lot on your right. If you turn to look at it you want to end up in the farthest left hand corner of it next to an apartment building. Now looking at the apartments you can see a parking lot behind them. Walk into that parking lot. Now with your back to the apartments you have a nice view of the north side of town. There's a steep slope down that starts where the pavement ends. Now still looking north walk to the right hand corner of the parking lot. Look down + you can see a narrow foot path leading down the slope. It's another path made by doctors + students. Walk down it, but be careful it's slippery sometimes.

Once down the hill you are standing in another parking lot behind another apartment building. Go left. As you walk notice the huge blank walls with no graffiti. Keep walking eventually you have to go right and you hit Depot st. Go left. You hit a 3 street intersection. Depot, State, and High street. Take High st. On your left is Gabriel Richard School which is a catholic school. The notable thing is their school sanctioned graffiti wall, that you'll see on your right. Mostly it says things like Happy Birthday Kati, but it's still cool cuz they could paint it over and they don't. Keep walking on High till you reach another big intersection. High, Detroit, and Division. You wanna go sorta left onto Detroit. Notice the abandoned building on the corner of Division and Detroit it has some cool art. Some of it old and a few things done by John Gerkin who writes the zine "I Hate This Part of Texas".

Keep going down Detroit. It's a very old street + still has the original bricks. On your right is Treasure Mart, an over priced used stuff store. At night the lights are always on but no one is there + you can steal Neil Diamond records off their porch if you want. Also the dumpster is good sometime but they watch it during the day. Keep walking you first pass the world famous Zingermans who hire people with funny hair + piercings and have done it for a long time, back when it was hard to get any job if you decided to dress that way. Their food is really expensive

and their dumpsters hard to get to but it's fairly easy to get free bags if you have big pockets. They make a big deal about the time they catwired to Hillary Clinton. Also on your left is Community High School, Ann Arbor's third + smallest High School. Detroit st curves a bit when it crosses 5th ave but just stay on the bricks + you're on the right street. On your right hand side is Kerry town and every Wednesday and Sunday the Farmers Market which is a really good place to buy vegetables + support the actual farmers that grow them. Detroit st. ends on Catherine. Straight Ahead is a stupid metal art thing and the Peoples Food CO-OP. A bit to your left is an alley. go down the alley.

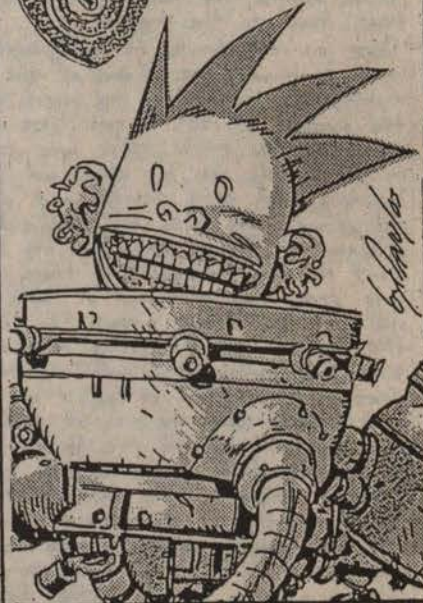
Notice on the right side of the alley is the co-op's trash. Sometimes you can find good stuff but rarely. You can always find left over wheat-grass. At the end of the alley, cross the street and go down the next one. On your left will be the Hands on Museum which is a fun place to go, but a little pricey. They have cheap days sometime, or they used to. Once in the alley look left and you can see stairs leading to the roof. They are blocked by a chain link fence which is easy to climb. The alley ends at Huron.

Go right down Huron passed one light and half way down the next block on your left across the street is another alley. Go down that way. Keep walking, look at art, ways to get on roofs and good places to throw generator shows. Walk for two blocks.

You're now on Liberty, and you're done with the walk. Turn right to get coffee at the Fleetwood, or just go home and warm up.

-the end-

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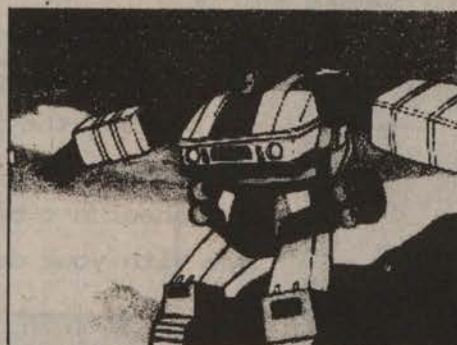
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Drugs & Racism

Langel Janson L. Bookbinder Esq. IX --

According to Jello Biafra's *I Blow Minds For A Living* [spoken word album #3 '91] some original 30;s era anti-Marijuana propaganda contained a slogan: "...they said that smoking marijuana might cause you to fall under the influence of listening to Jazz." Now we're not talking of Benny Goodman, the original whigger, but of someone who is much blacker. Jazz is an autobot and he is so very very jive-turkey black that he attempts to speak bad jive! Let us spell back to Transformer's episode #35 *Megatron's Master Plan Part II* where we found our Jazz actually involved in a racial stint with an authentic cowboy.

Now when an intra-time-era gang war between bikers and cowboys breaks out what is the best way to stop it? Loud music. So Jazz offers them "...number one on the bottom forty!" which is a shitty lead guitar laid over some ever-whirling break beat. It sounds like 'white funk' at any rate. The lead cowboy shrieks, "This trail's spooked boys! Mount up!" If they were politically correct cowboys they would have said 'This trail is African-Americanized! Let's steer clear of the bandwagon!' but they are a bunch of racist fucks. Good thing none of the transformers are chinese or they'd prolly try to get them to build a railroad. Fascists.



Now this whole scene is reminiscent to that of Robert Zemeckis's fine film *Back to the Future* where Biff's thugs throw little frail Marty McFly into the trunk of a car. It was not just anyone's car. No. It was the car of the American Negro band performing at their beautiful *Enchantment Under the Sea* dance. "The hell you doing to my car?" asked the first brother to exit the automobile. "Hey, beat it, spook, this don;t concern you," replied the 3-D glasses wearing idiot-boy-wannabe. The rest of the doors became open and at least eighty (80) black men piled out like clowns from a clowny clown car followed by huge

billows of smoke which blocked the passionate yet steamy moonlight. A dark voice creepier than that of Death came from one of the dark, mysterious men, "Who you calling spook, peckerwood?" Scared, rural, ignorant white kids do NOT want to "mess with some reefer addicts, ok?" I figure that Zemeckis got some strong hate mail about this scene because in his next film, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, there were absolutely no black people in it at all. Unless you want to

count that Ape bouncer but I would go ahead and guess that that was a more subtle prejudice against AIDs.

So as you can see black people like music, cars and the reefer and I as a white person hate all these things.

Oh shit! What about Dildo Faggins and Merlin enjoying "Old Toby. The finest weed in the SouthFarthing."? After all Gimli, son of Gloin, hates fucking elves. Wha-?

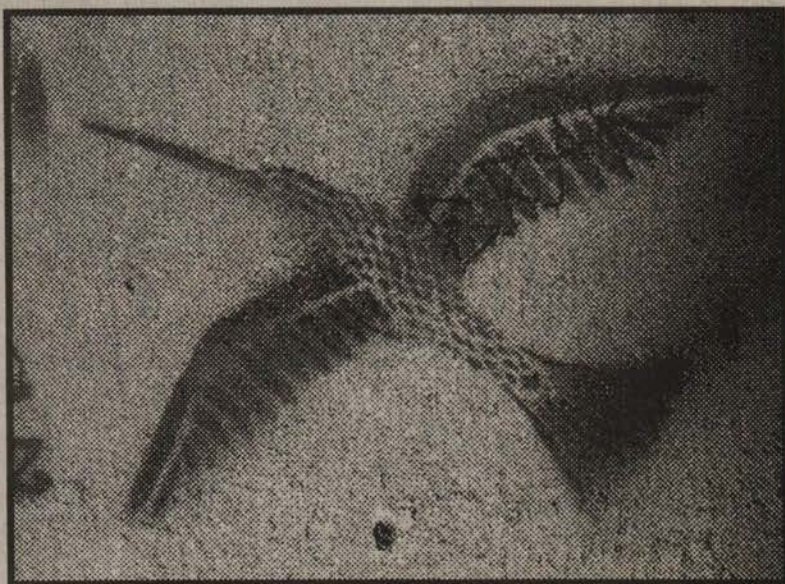
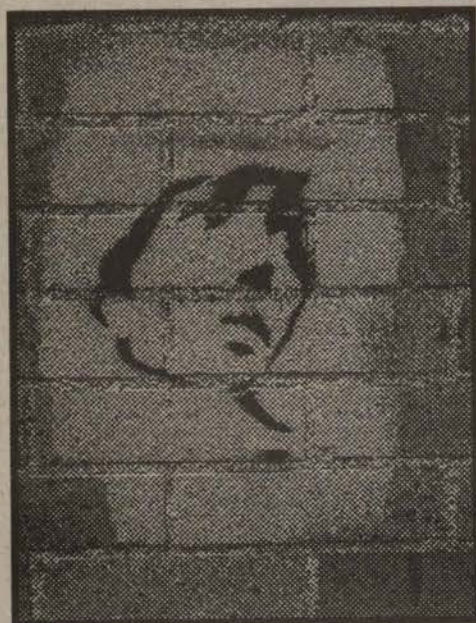
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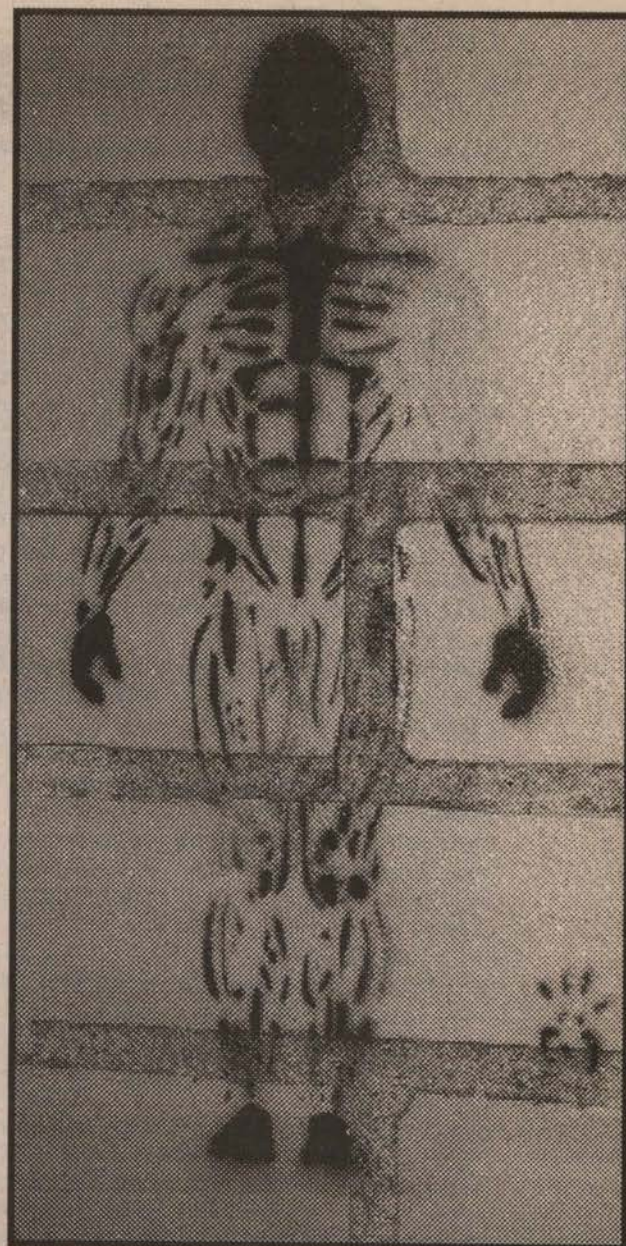
STENCILS FROM AROUND TOWN.

I like to take pictures of the stencil graffiti around town. These are some of my favorite pictures, out of stencils that I've seen over the last year or so. They were taken mostly close to downtown: Liberty, Washington, State St. area. Obviously these pictures are in black and white, but the world is not, so get up, go outside and look for them yourself. You shouldn't believe anything you don't see with your own eyes anyways.



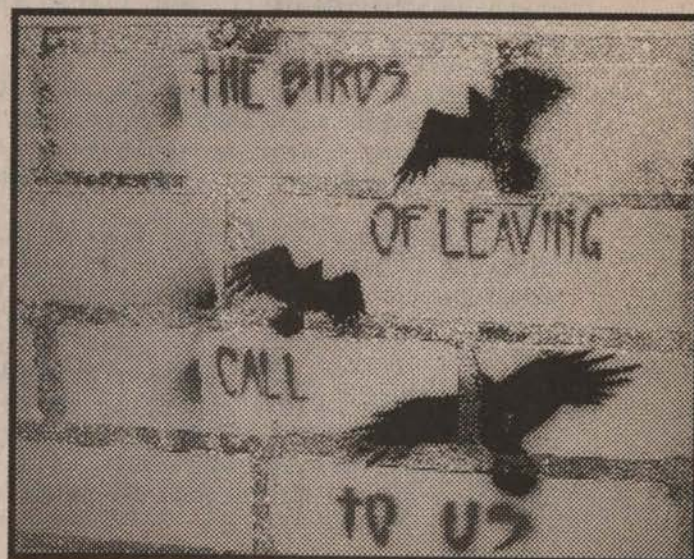
Send us
Stencils.
we like
Photos but
will take
the actual
stencils
also





Actually, even better than going out to look at stencils would be to make your own. It's pretty easy: take a piece of cardboard or a thick folder and cut it up. cut out the parts that you want to be painted. put your stencil against a wall, and paint over it with spray paint. when you paint, go out at night and go with other people so that someone can look out for the cops and people.

if you're not trying to make money off other people's art and you want (digital) copies of these pictures, you can email me: max@michiganimc.org



Blank Thoughts

Mike Blank

"Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul."

Mark Twain said that. Or least supposedly he did. I'm not sure. I was not there. Either were you. At that point in Twain's life, all we were was some vague notion of what the future might be. We, the collective we, were in that state of pre-existence. I doubt that Twain could of correctly imagined all of the mundane nuances, both positive and negative, that exist in the current state of "now." But what Twain did have a grasp on was the essential, timeless human condition. Meaning that people will respond in generally the same ways to positive or negative stimuli, regardless of what form the stimuli manifest themselves. Example- a morning star from the 1500's is of the same in intent as a 9mm is today. Pain, fear, death etc etc. Mark Twain's quote is just as powerful in it's intent now as when he said it. Then again I could be totally full of shit. I've never owned a 9mm or a morning star. Additionally, I have never read anything by Mark Twain besides a few cool quotes I've read off a t-shirt. A true product of the late 20th century am I.

"Loyalty is petrified opinion..." When we read those words a thousand images comes crashing into our respective minds. We each interpret the phrase through our own unique lens which has been developed through our own experiences. To me, "loyalty to petrified opinion...." brings one particular institution to my mind's forefront. The institution of religion.

Where were you when some elder spoke to you about God or heaven and hell? Was it your Grandma, maybe your mom, a concerned neighbor? I'm sure you were somewhat young and it probably didn't make a whole lot of sense then. It probably doesn't make a whole lot of sense now either. Go figure. Since we each have our own perspective, let me share with you mine own.

I remember sitting in a child's bike seat behind my father as we pedaled through the small Michigan town we lived in then. My father was speaking aloud, but not to me or anyone else that had a physical presence as far as I could tell. I was too young to think anything strange of it, but I knew that the words didn't sound like any words I had heard before. It was relaxing and I remember feeling very peaceful and full of love. Soon words came to me. Words that are still with me today. Words that I have no idea of their meaning, yet I am quite sure they are ancient and powerful. I believe that was first day I ever spoke in tongues. Those of you who grew up in charismatic evangelical Christian homes, you know what I'm talking about.

Time out.....I think I might have an idea of what you're thinking. "Okay dude, you're saying when you was a little kid your dad rode you around on some shitty 1970's huffy 5-speed while praying in 'tongues' whatever the hell that's supposed to mean... and then you just started speaking in them too.....! Dude you're so full shit!"well, I won't disagree with you, I could be full of shit. I dunno. All I am trying to do is share with you what I experienced as a child. I grew up in a Christian home. My father was an Episcopal priest/jazz musician. Luckily for me he was very laid back and a true Christian. He never pushed

his views on anyone, even me, his own kid.

To fast forward a bit, I experienced life through these conditions. As a child, I lay in my bed and contemplated eternity until my mind was blown (I'm thankful I did that back then because if I tried to do that today, I think I would go insane). At age 5, I made a bet with Satan for my eternal soul that I could eat all the oats first before eating the marshmallows from my bowl of lucky charms. I lost. Occasionally I'd get to witness a healing here and there. Got filled with the holy spirit a few times (it's better than sex and lasts way longer). But in the end there was this weird feeling, like something wasn't quite right. Maybe it was bet I lost with Satan over the Lucky Charms, I'm not sure. And over time I stopped going to church. I wanted to get different view points, to see what other people believed, to find out what made their clocks tick. What made them loyal to a petrified opinion....

As I explored other religions and other philosophies I came to a conclusion. In principle, all religions were much alike. Each had sacred texts and rules. If you studied the texts and followed the rules, you would receive an award, usually an eternity in heaven/paradise. Basically it becomes a formula. Doing X combined with Y will result in Z. All you have to do is fill in the variables with whatever fits in the particular culture the religion is from. The best part is, that for the people in control, or who would like to take control, the variables can be manipulated.

Of course, religions have been around since prehistory and there are many reasons given for their existence. Explanation of the unknown, social order, continuation of the existing social structure, fear of death, maintaining civil order, protection of the tribe, etc etc. all have been given as reasons for religion's existence. But is not the real question. The question is: Do they work? Does loyalty to petrified opinion work?

I believe the answer is no..... and yes. Sometime last year I was conversing with independent author Chuck Trasch. He had been on real anti-religion kick as of late and in the course of the discussion we came across a horrible insight. The worst part about religions is that they actually can help and do good. The institution for which billions of lives have been sacrificed (at times literally) has brought joy and fulfillment to billions.

To me, religions are nothing but programs for the computer that is the human mind. All lead to the same goal -infinite light or infinite nothingness. The problem that arises is that once a human mind accepts the religion program must suitable to its user, it tends to, like many computers, reject all other programs in total. You can't run PC programs on a Mac and vice versa.....unless you have some computer skill and have an over all understanding on how it works. Like most Christians, I can honestly say Jesus is the child of God, but I also believe so are you. Like a computer, most Christian's programming would reject that notion. We could interchange that example with thousands of others from the religions around the world. I'm not sure if there has always been people who feel the same way as me. I want to believe that the number of people willing to tolerate all programs is growing but there's a part of me that feels that maybe there has always been a certain percentage of

people with open minds and the reason we exist is so a balance can be maintained. I'm not sure.

All I know for sure is that Mark Twain's quote, "Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul." struck such a chord within me that I stole the T-shirt.

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LOCAL FICTION

NOT EVERYBODY LEAVES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

Joseph Harms

I will not describe her face beneath the lucent white handkerchief with embroidered tulips along the brim. That thin square of cloth like the lingerie she'd wear. As I stand over Marie's last bed a clock drips a dollop of blood on green linoleum for each second past. The feeling comes again. There are holes in the heels of my boots and there are holes in the smeared green floor that go deep to a depository where every splash of blood, crescent of fingernail and snippet of hair is stored to rebuild the sufferers in strength and the easy-goers in weakness. From the mouths in my heels I feel the struggle of everything inside that constantly tries to escape lax and slip easily into the two tunnels I stand on. My organs slowly rotate to face the opposite direction, slide into new positions and all at once descend, tumbling over themselves. It's the feeling you'd get if upon cutting the scalp of a pumpkin and yanking it off by the tuff of hardened hair like a brown curl of fire you saw that it was crammed with innards, blood and teeth—the reality of death.

Hovering like long-legged vultures, the funeral guests take in the beautiful, young tragedy and then perch with stark beaks and red faces on the metal fold-chairs in Marie's living room. Outside, neon yellow and unreal red leaves with paler fish belly bottoms applaud before they flip wildly to the street.

A month before Marie was killed we lay in bed as night grew gray from fear of the dawn. I was close to sleep, but she was still antsy so she tickled me, pored water into my ear with a straw and kept touching that spot beneath that electrifies my stomach and makes me jump. She said, "Collis, you know I can't sleep unless I'm touching your perineum." Early that day I had taken her dog for a walk in the woods. It had never been off its leash or in the woods so it stayed close. I coaxed it into a cornfield by racing into the picket fence of wilted, dry, shrugged-shouldered corn. It followed but would not leave my side. I ran through the corn with a thousand long, blonde cat tongues licking my face and arms. When I returned, Marie gave her dog some aspirin to keep her joints from freezing and said, "Look at the way that dog looks at you." Then in a voice that moms use on their babies, "She loves you so much."

I hug Marie's parents and leave, nearly knocking down a stack of boxes crouched and waiting to be cut opened so that finally what's inside, ready to spill, will be let out—unpacked. There's a circus under our skin. Its main attraction is the fire hose extravaganza. Tubes of every knit, width and length will be ignited with liquid and let loose in a wet frenzy of seizures, spasms, dancing and intercourse.

The street is bright and mean with scrambling kids going after some object like ravenous gremlins and old people, deformed by gravity's tug, like common sideshow freaks. This town is new to me so I head toward the traffic lights and hope for a coffee shop as I jostle my pack of Viceroys in my jacket pocket. Earlier that night when Marie kept poking me awake, she said in an accusing tone, "You've added the thought process to everything. If I squeeze your nose and ask you, does this hurt, you say no, meaning it doesn't matter. You apply this to everything as if it made life simple—does it matter...or not. I could cut you and you'd just lie there and say it doesn't hurt when of course it does."

I take my coffee outside. You can't smoke inside. My muffler lungs exhaust the dust that remains where once a soaked sack of heavy blood hung from the hangers in my chest. The smoke spells a gray word with glinting edges that ribbon upward, connecting me to the sky in a very different way than the mouths in my heels grip the brim of dirt around the holes that are where I am with brittle, busted seashell teeth. Viceroy's burn quicker than any square I've smoked, so I light another off the bristled and burning filter.

I'm twenty-one and I've been accused of many things -lack of concern, lack of emotion, lack of feelings, lack of expression, lack of morals, murder, rape and anything likewise. I never shared a horrific moment with Marie. That moment that is inevitably created with every other person I've let myself behave naturally around. She said, "Say we each have a wheel of emotions in our skulls that is horizontal. It's not that you're missing a wheel altogether. Yours is vertical and the biggest pie of the wheel is floating above your head like a gas station camera that films in black and white."

There's a slot in the mortar between the sunset bricks on the wall behind me. As if commanded, I put my cig in it, get up, go in and buy an apple fritter. I can't eat the whole thing so I roll it into snakes on the glass table. The last snake is a mother lined with two rows of feeders, each clamped tight by the lips of a baby snake. I fit the fritter snakes into the gap in the mortar. They slither into the space between walls that is rarely thought about.

As I get up to leave, an old man stops me and says, "You coming from the funeral? They're new to town right? Why would someone so new have their funeral here and not wherever they came from? I guess probably cause we got more funeral homes than bars, churches, hospitals and retirement homes all put together. That's probably why. You know the deceased very well?"

"No. Just a family friend."

"Why's there an ambulance out front? The person's no more ain't he?" To himself, "If this is even a funeral we're talking about anyway." Back to me, "So they ain't necessarily religious are they?"

"No. And they prefer an ambulance to a hearse as far as transportation to the crematorium."

"So they ain't burying him I take it?"

"Nope. I gotta go."

"All right then, see you around."

Half a block away the demented old man hollers, "So what? Does that mean there ain't gonna be no grave neither?"

Without turning, I answer, "Nope."

"Then how you gonna remember him?"

"Not as a slab of stone."

I turn a corner and light another cig. It might be easier, gentler to stare at a slab of stone than at nothing specific.

I check in at the motel by the highway and it's only four in the afternoon. The room is small with pastels and fake gold at every opportunity. My head averted, I shut the bathroom door without looking in. I put my hand over my nose and mouth to be certain that they're actually

there and perch on the edge of the bed. To go in there now with my face covered but for my eyes would pump my wheel of emotions into a volatile sphere filled with the fluid of my base emotion—suicide. Andy's face with a shredded hole in its center like a bite mark, like a large rock thrown through a white sheet of paper pasted with two green eyes gone slightly crossed from the impact—a suicide survivor with the unforgiving, constant reminder stapled around the chap lipped edges of his hole as if hands were shoved into his mouth, fingers gripping his cheeks to pull and rip till his lips elongated and then snapped like rubber bands to dangle in many triangles. Everyday, a suicide survivor till life is questionable and finally unreal, making anything possible. If you're in hell you may do as you please. And so Andy did. His blood-kissed cotton swabs will be wedged in corners and cracks in the bathroom. Why wouldn't they be? They turn up when things don't make sense.

Rather than enter the bathroom, I urinate in a twenty ounce bottle, cap it, aim off the balcony and toss it into the dumpster three stories down. To my left are fast food restaurants, gas stations, lumberyards, car dealerships and finally the early 1900's downtown strip not much different than where Marie used to live. On my immediate right is the highway's on and off ramps, then beds that pull to the horizon, blanketed in corn with headboards of trees every color of rust and mildew. The day has become bright gray with a solid ceiling of clouds freighting, and pale wisps like giant feathers racing close above the town. My fingers grip the black balcony rail and when they shift positions chips of paint flake off and stick to my hands to reveal the burnt-orange, raw rusted metal flesh beneath the charred skin. As I pluck the brittle paint buttons from my skin I am the absence of pressure, warmth, weight, scent, lips, skin, eyes, devotion and love that Marie brought into my arms—like being bisected long-ways into two halves only to then watch the other half burn before you. Tacky but true.

Again the oxidized metal within this loose, charcoaled skin has turned to sand that sifts quickly past the mouths in my heels, through the grating at my feet to be taken by the wind to form the fleeting, finite shape of a woman's blown hair. I am an honest hourglass. Time tics like blood drips to build a puddle of the past. Sand cascades not into a contained and observable pile, but into irretrievable specks of light that rarely return and if one does, it'll roost on your iris and make you cry for no remembered reason till it once again is lost.

I light a smoke, exhale cobwebs and spit spiders. I once dreamt that my thumb and toenails were glass. Beneath them spiders floated and at the right bend of my nail they became giant and bloated. Terrified, I squeezed each container till hundreds of spiders had spurted out. I then realized that as they dried these hundreds of unaccounted spiders would come back to life. End dream.

Marie said, "The reason for everything is death." Everything except death.

I turn and look into the easy-on-the-eyes pastel and gold plated room. The bathroom door is still shut. A room that promises to remove righteousness, justice, judgment, sorrow, joy and on and on. What reason is there to go into that determined bathroom where Andy shot his face, Erin, Professor Rolland and my mom? I've lost all those illusions long ago and am now bored with it all, so I stare past the drone of the highway.

From the center of a cornfield, pellets of crows surge upward from the swaying stalks in a tidal wave of feathered shrapnel and dusty brown leaves. From the brindle mustache of

distant trees comes the wind to bust the crescent blackcap of crows and scatter their speckled wave. As if they had banged against a cliff, the black birds seal their wings to their bodies and disappear back into the raised arms of the corn.

The next morning I wake before dawn. The rental car dealership opens at nine a.m. and the train station has departures at the same time and at noon. It's not five yet, so I fill a Styrofoam cup with hotel coffee, step out front, sip, smoke and release the vague smog of sleep through my nostrils, puff by puff. By the time I'm done smoking, soup sloshes through my skeleton, staining my bones greasy with Marie's vacancy.

The moons nearly gone over the edge—reddened and warped, plugged like a beaten head on the black saw of trees. Across the street the clerk steps out of the gas station for a cig and seems to be watching me. The doors slide open behind me and a very fat couple with white hair and yellow sacks under their eyes push by with their luggage on wheels. Life is being caught in a burning building full of grossly obese people. The Coney Island by the gas station turns on and the plastic burger on the pole begins to rotate. From two cone-shaped speakers lower on the pole the tint of A.M. oldies plays from far off—long dead voices. Traffic lights stop their questioning blinks—yellow and red—and stick to a steady green and red. A train hollers a diminished chord from where the crows emerged with the wind the previous evening. Streetlights make trees wrap their branches into spiral spider webs. At the end of my vision, where the corn meets the forest, a long cone of light quickly stretches from the woods and widens as it pulls closer towards this town—a bright yellow road ending in a point at the welter moon. The train rips through the field as a scalpel up a belly—an encompassing tear from that swollen pink eye. Its three front lights turn the leaves of the trees by where I sit into embers and their branches into intolerant black pokers.

I rent the cheapest car for a day. I should be back to my city and my apartment by five. I stop at the gas station for coffee and a pack before getting on the entrance ramp. Up ahead in the road a circle of shards of glass glows like slivers of the sun. As I swerve around it, I see it to be a spun-out reel of tape. In its center a squirrel's tail quivers like a feathered arrow plugged into the street. The ramp curves in a full circle. Halfway through the curve I hit the brakes hard to avoid crashing into the last of a line of cars trying to exit into three lanes of motionless traffic. Already five other cars are pushed in behind me. More come till the entire ramp is a coiled rainbow snake of metal scales with fumes leaking through its slits. I glance over the highway faces, most resting in annoyance against a palm or window. I never could wait in lines. Everyday I wait for one thing or another but I can't do it surrounded by others waiting for a common release. Once the car in front of me moves a foot I'll be able to pull off onto the shoulder.

Marie said, "We're stuck. We're both waiting for the other's life to pick up, for the other to make the big decision so that we can move. It's like meeting a friend at a restaurant and you have to use the bathroom. You don't let yourself because you think, I'll miss him and he'll miss me and then all this waiting will be wasted. You say, In ten minutes I'll use the bathroom. Then anxiety hits and you give him another ten as your bladder is poisoning your system. Then you start thinking, I'll be here till I die, waiting. But what choice do you

have? The second you leave, he'll come and when he does will he look for you, find you and then follow you?

"You know, we're a lot like that Greek myth. This guy is destined to discover, build and rule Rome. This is his life's ambition and religion. It takes precedence over everything—morals and ethics included. To fail is suicide. On his way he meets a great woman who had already built her city, whose husband was recently killed. During this big storm they have sex in a cave and to her this is marriage. For ten years they live together in love, his purpose hazed and forgotten. His meaning lost in love with her. It is also easier to put off such a big task, to forget about it, to wait in comfort. Then one day it dawns on him that he must create Rome, so he leaves despite his love and devotion. Losing her second husband knocks her off the edge and she kills herself.

"Sometimes I think I should break your heart and leave you so you'll attack the publishers, move to New York City and make them publish you, because I know you won't leave me for your soul."

I pull out of traffic onto the grass and walk back to the rental shop. I give them the keys, explain that their car stalled in the traffic jam and tell them I'd wait till tomorrow. They politely charge me twenty bucks.

At the historic part of town I'm always just a few blocks from Marie's parent's new home, so I make no delay in getting to the train depot.

"I'd like to get on the twelve O'clock west to _____"

"Sorry, but the train only stops here to drop off and that's very sporadic. We get maybe three drop-offs in a working week."

"Can you phone and have them stop for a pickup?"

"As I said, the train only drops off. You need to give twenty-four hours notice for a pickup. And on top of that the prices are steep for such short notice."

"How much?"

"Sixty dollars at least."

"Can I have a notice placed for tomorrow at nine a.m.?"

"That'd be a twenty-three hour notice which is impossible."

"Well, notify them for noon then."

"Will do. I'll need a down payment now and also I need to see your driver's license."

"How much?"

"Thirty-five, seventy-five."

I hand it over, wait while he copies my license number down and begin to suspect that if traffic is normal tomorrow I'll rent a car rather than float around this town any longer.

The hospital trails are camouflaged with yellow leaves over slick mud. They sink or slip under my weight like bandages over a soaked sore. The hospital is separated into six buildings scattered throughout the forest. The forest is in the middle of downtown. The short cuts to these buildings are unkempt deer paths through large islands of trees between parking lots.

I go for a smoke and can't find my lighter. With my cig in lip, I walk around the healing huts looking for a worker on break who might be able to help. A fat man in gray

sweats from ankle to neck with a thick handlebar mustache slaps a pack of Viceroy's against his wrist and coughs like he's trying to blow the rat off his lip.

"Do you have a light?"

"Yep."

He tips his cig. I lean close and before he can get mine, I smell roadside rot — unmistakable.

He says, "You smoke Viceroy's too, huh?"

"Yeah, I started out with them and go back now and then. Started smoking Viceroy's, started dying likewise."

He barks a laugh.

We're at the cement clearing around the main building that waits for everyone just outside the forest.

He studies his cig and says, "This is what's killing me and they don't understand how that's not reason enough to quit." He barks a few more times. "I've been in chemo for five months. Seven thousand a buzz." He looks up from his cig, grins and barks again. "My wife died of cancer and then I got it, so why stop? All I have are my cigarettes and my alcohol."

I shrug and follow his gaze past my shoulder.

He says, "The turkey vultures are hovering again."

They rotate slowly over the hospital in two nebulae.

"Seems like a bad sign."

"This place has a back door too. Not everybody leaves out the front door." He waits to let what he said sink in and then says, "Those god damned dusty winged soul catchers." And begins barking. "Yep, they say I could die anytime during this thing."

I like him for not telling me I should quit.

For five years, every night at dinner after my mom said grace, she'd pray for Lisa Howard — this girl next door who got cancer at ten, fought it till fifteen and then died. After my mom was done she and my dad would discuss the blood and bone marrow drives and all the rest, reveling in relief over their confrontation with the sick. The excitement and nourishment of pity for that specific unfairness brought them into the moment. Lisa laid tragic importance around their lives and they sprinkled it on our food.

One night when my mom was updating us on the neighbor's drawn-out, dulled-down death, she said, "Lisa's mom ran the brush through her hair and a chunk came out. She said Lisa just looked at it for five minutes, then with her hand she plucked another clump out. Then another and another and then her mom started to help and after ten minutes she was bald and they were both hysterical with laughter." She sighed. "They really are making the best of things, but her tongue is black now."

The sun sprays a sheet of thick orange glass over everything as it rolls off the earth. I use the restroom at the station across the street so the bathroom door in my room can remain closed. I have a memory close to reality and the shot through the mouth dead — none survived, save Andy who imposed it upon himself — found in their bathrooms, passed off as suicides, are not really dead, they just always die.

LOCAL FICTION

Joseph Harms

7

Not Everybody...

As it darkens, the moon alights as the hole in a black sheet of paper held against a rare source of light cooler than bright or warm. A crab claw of clouds pinches the moon like an ashen hand plucking a pearl. The closest tree to my balcony is nearly bald with scabs of bark and sores of leaves. The worms leave their webbed nests that are punctured throughout the treetop and crawl down the glassy white trunk in single file.

My phone rings, so I answer.

"Hello."

"Collis, this is Sandy."

Marie's mother.

"Hi, Sandy. Are you doing all right?"

"No. It'll be a while before that. I'm really just calling to make sure you plan on surviving—going on." She concedes a tired laugh.

"There're as many reasons to stop as there are to go."

"Yeah... Look, Ray and I would love it if you stayed with us for a few days at least. You left the funeral pretty quickly and I just now had time to be concerned. Are you at your apartment or work?"

"I'm actually still at the hotel."

"Oh, great. You want to keep us company for the rest of the evening?"

"I would, but I'm already dozing. I got up pretty early to leave."

"Why didn't you?"

"Traffic jam. Plus my rental car over-heated and stalled."

"So when do you plan on getting home?"

"Well, I gotta train ticket for tomorrow at noon."

"Collis, come over tonight then."

I can't. I have some sort of love and trust in Marie's parents that would cause me to openly break down, losing the sea my eyes bob in.

"I'm sorry Sandy, but I just can't tonight."

Sighing, she says, "I understand. I just thought if you were here we'd stop crying and become presentable. Christ, my ribs hurt. Look, I've gone through my parents' deaths—nowhere near as awful—and one thing I feel I should tell you is, fake it. Fake feeling ok. Fake going to work. Fake everything and in time it will become real."

"That's what I'm trying to do."

"You know, Ray and I love you, Collis."

Even over the phone, mushrooming emotions opposite to my usual drainage and mummification come, so I say quickly, "I love both of you."

"If you're anxious to get out of this town—I know I am, we're planning on moving again, out of state—I'll buy your ticket, but not for tomorrow afternoon. Come to dinner tomorrow, stay the night and leave the next morning."

I feel overwhelmed and tired right now.

"I'll probably do just that, Sandy, but let me sleep then consider."

"All right. But if you leave without calling or stopping by, I'll be hurt."

We hang up.

A door of murky orange clouds raises from the tree line and carefully slides over the moon to shut on the other edge of earth, locking me in here, right now, with no consolation and nothing to love but perhaps my reeking soul.

Imagine you're lying in a kiddie pool of shallow, motionless water, and that kiddie pool is floating in an ocean full of sharks. You are your problems, so you see only two options -be bored in the kiddie pool or be occupied by sharks. Why would someone sleep with the wife of a murderous war vet, potentially destroying their marriage, ruining her daughter's life and possibly getting everyone killed by her wild husband? Because it was the only course of action that'd take him into something new and alive, cause he felt dead in a vague and mundane way, he wanted to see if he could do it, he's the type who holds his problems as sacred scars that spell his name, it was the absolutely wrong choice that'd give him tingles of freewill, his conscience is a shrug that says to do wrong is to live, because of the typical morbidity of the strange youth. Why did she do it? Cause she'd rather be a goldfish strangling out of the boring circle of water. That's more interesting isn't it? Neutrality, comfort and hope for a future are the only godless sins, right?

Marie was murdered by the married woman who I made fall in love with me to better manipulate her into publishing what I thought was a masterpiece. Her husband had a flash back to better execute revenge through killing their daughter. The author, saturated in guilt, grief and hate, confronted Marie and I, and simply shot her.

Have you ever been asked, What kind of person are you? Meaning, Don't you have morals? Every woman I've known has asked me this question and only with Marie did I bother to answer. She's the only person that ever made me accountable and, in a perverse way, in love with the world.

I answered, "I'm not a good person, though since I met you I've tried very hard to be."

It was the wrong answer. I should have explained that I was a constantly desperate person. I didn't have to try to be good to Marie. It took all my effort to hurt her as badly as I did.

At the depot at ten in the morning -I thought all thoughts of the future must be dead daydreams- but the disappointment I'd cause by rejecting Sandy's invitation nags at me. Although I don't want to talk to anyone seriously ever again and I don't want to talk about Marie to anyone, I like Sandy and Ray too much to exclude them from whatever kind of life I may start.

By eleven the guy at the counter is nervous and asks me to pay for the rest of the ticket that I have yet to receive. Rather than respond, I leave for a pack of smokes. I call Sandy and ask if dinner is at six as usual.

"Yeah, but come over early so we can do some smoking before Ray gets home."

She keeps her cigarette smoking from her husband.

On a bench on Main Street, I watch the traffic thicken with students fresh out of school for the weekend. Pickup trucks with ten kids in school colors perched in their beds cruise the strip back and forth. The bass drum and marching snare fire down the block. The

LOCAL FICTION

Joseph Harms

9

Not Everybody...

horns kick on and some ridiculous anthem is played. From all the side streets that lead to the town homes, little kids patter under parents, some pedaling three wheelers or bikes with training wheels or razor scooters. They're all dressed in costumes. Many are pumpkins, gourds and squashes—not many scary or gross monsters or murderers. The young kids run away from their parents towards the music. The band starts another anthem while the kids scurry and the adults take seats along the grassy curbs of Main Street. All these kids, none yet in fourth grade. I crane my neck to glance three blocks down to where the band marches in place. Two girls hold a banner that reads, HALLOWEEN CHILDREN'S PARADE. All the kids fall clumsily in behind the band and the parade moves toward where I sit. None of them know who I am as they walk past me, waving and throwing candy at my feet. A couple tootsie rolls are at the tip of my shoe and they are what fear looks like. There's a frog welded to my heart about to croak, blowing its red balloon up with muddy blood. The flipping of my organs, the expelling mouths in my heels, the nests of spiders in my lungs, the soup railroad kill mixing beneath my skin, the doors of my ribs parting to reveal a moon hung by hope—a waning pendulum—and my eyes gliding in a sea of anglers, pupils fixed on an eclipsed sun against a relentlessly blue sky. As if everything around me had exposed itself as intricate stacks of lidless eyeballs and upon seeing me they collapse and roll towards the end of gravity.

As I reach to pick up a tootsie roll, I feel someone sit beside me. I sit up and see Sandy lighting her Salem. We exchange weak smiles, lean back and watch the little kids dance by. The tootsie roll is a wound on my palm and I need a cig, not candy. I smile at Sandy again. We don't talk—the band is too loud and it'd only hurt to do so. I unwrap the tiny brown cylinder and stare at it like another eye. I bring it before my lips, feeling Sandy's eyes on me, and put it in my mouth. Poisonous and sour like lemon juice in cream. I go frantically for a cig but stop when I realize what had happened to my face. It had broke without me feeling it. That torn smile of sobbing. I put my palm to the side of my face Sandy can see and it becomes wet and warm with the water draining from my head, slipping from under my eyes. My mouth fills with water and the energy to spit the poisonous glob out is gone, so I put my shaky fingers past my teeth, pinch it like a moon of mud, and drop it back at my feet. I can hear Sandy crying and feel her fierce hold around me. I swallow the curdled taste in my mouth till it's not as potent.

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Submissions for fiction
should be mailed to:
BAD IDEAS
807 NORTH MAIN ST
ANN ARBOR, MI
48104

Submissions will NOT BE RETURNED

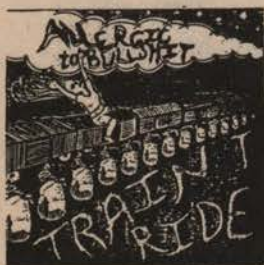
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48104

Allergic to Bullshit, "Train I Ride", 7"



How do you describe this record? It's sloppy but not too sloppy, fast but not too fast, melodic, yeah, some. Energetic? Yes. One thing for sure is that the singer, a woman named Ivy (not the A2 Ivy), has one of the most amazing, unique voices I've ever heard in a punk band. Gravely and not at the same time. Kinda sounds like Jen from Submission Hold, but deeper. The lyrics are personal but not annoyingly so. Songs about history, loss and reflection. This is a five-song 7 inch that comes with a 12-page booklet with lyrics, art, and a few stories about the band, "Relocating for the rock" by Greg Harvester (drums) and "The band that gets arrested together, stays together" by Iggy Scam (guitar). JRS- not sure, but probably around \$4 or \$5 ppd

Half-Day Records
p.o. box 3381
Bloomington, IN 47402

Allergic to Bullshit "What We're for is What We'll Get" 7"



This record is one I've never heard before. Vocalist Ivy has a kind of Janis Joplin/Axl Rose (but not annoying) voice over rumble and fuzz rock and roll. Reminds me of the MC5. Includes a fun bluesy cover of "I'm not ashamed". I'm not giving it back. CR-

Left off the dial
p.o box 3941
Oakland, CA 94609

Chaos LR "You Might Already be a Winner" 7"



You know that section of town that they talk about in that section of the paper? This is the soundtrack. White trash rants a la the Dwarves with playful guitars. The fact that the music was recorded a year before the words surprised me, the mastering mixed them well. I picked this up at a show a while ago and I'm glad I did, it's a good time. The sleeve is covered with hilarious headlines from the "Arkansas Section", "Uncle Says Niece Beat Him with Hoe" and "Disabled Hitchhiker Robbed, Abandoned", these people are real, this is their music. CR-

This Here records
P.O. box 481,
Chattanooga, TN 37401

Key
S/T = Self Titled
V/A = Various Artists
JRS = Josh
CR = Crash
IV = Ivy

Forced Vengeance

S/T 7"



Another fucking good release from the Chattanooga-based This Here Records. I love this record. Female-fronted punk, think, Naked Aggression meets Minor Threat with more personal politics. Lines like, "I believe in a world people say are stupid dreams, but while we were dreaming they were just asleep.." from the song "Believe" kinda blow me away and fill me with all kinds of hope. Eight songs fit on this record, none of them over the minute-and-thirty mark. Also included is a 12 page booklet with photos and lyrics which is always a nice touch. Everyone should have this record. JRS- not sure but \$4-\$5 ppd should be right.

This Here records
p.o. box 481
Chattanooga, TN 37401

Hello Shitty People

S/T 7"



Hello Shitty People hail from Gainesville and are just fucking great. Their music is tight, their recording is really crisp and their lyrics are thoughtful and beautiful. As an added bonus they've got lots of tantalizing anus references in their liner notes. Their heavier cover of "I Kill Butterflies" by the Onion Flavored Rings is actually, in my opinion, better than the original, although the peppiness of the original is what makes lines like "I kill butterflies, I make babies cry..." a novelty. At any rate, I love it and I would love to see them live. IV-

This Here
p.o. box 481
Chattanooga, TN 37401

Jarvis

"Wild in the night" 7"



These guys come from Chattanooga and pump out some pretty good old-fashioned punk rock. These are solid tunes with vocals belted out in a style reminiscent of Choking Victim. With an irritating lack of liner notes there's not much to offer details wise. they're worth listening to and I suppose you'll just have to write to them to see what they're all about. IV-

This Here Records
p.o. box 481
Chattanooga, TN 37401

Queer Wulf

S/T 7"



Recorded hung over on new year's day, this record is short on sympathy. Great thrash with sometimes crusty feel, they scream fuck your broken heart. I saw their great high-energy show at the Network about a year and a half ago. A great pit and lively stage. Go see them, now! CR-

This Here Records
P.O. Box 481
Chattanooga, TN. 37401

Sexy



POR VIDA

Sexy

"Por Vida" 12'

I saw Sexy play at the Bad Idea house. They rocked out with their cock out! So fun! The drummer played the whole show with a "broken" ankle. Songs of malt liquor, lost love, lost on tour and late to work played in bouncy fun punk with elements of Op. Ivy and the Circle Jerks. For those hippy-types who dig the Yard Birds or the indie kid into Radio Four, but dirty and drunk. While definitely a rough-around-the-edge recording the mix was pretty good, although the guitars were a little too muddy and the drumming was loud. Recorded at the SPAM Warehouse in East Oakland, I got a copy at the show and I still listen to it. CR-

Onion Flavored Records

P.O. box 190054

S.F., CA. 94119



SPLIT- Chickenhead/Los Canadians

"Mutiny in Miami" CD



This is a release from the early 90's by two bands from the San Francisco area which basically consist of the same members, Los Canadians evolving out of Chickenhead by adding Ivy on vocals and Timmy Put on bass. Both bands are similar, energetic and fun, but Los Canadians have noticeably honed their skills at their respective instruments and definitely outdo Chickenhead, whose lyrics are, well, appropriate for a 1992 punk band. IV-

contact info:

p.o. box 40272

San Francisco, CA 94140

SPLIT-Sharp Knife/Queer wulf

(no title) 12'



Sharp Knife are from San Francisco but are somewhat reminiscent of what has come out of the Detroit scene lately. Their music is sort of generic punk riffs with screaming hardcore-ish vocals. It seems odd to me and somewhat sacrilegious that a band would write such fucking good lyrics, I mean really beautiful stuff, and then just belt them out incoherently over their music. Queer wulf is really similar and yet somehow just better and easier to listen to. Dare I say they are better musicians? Yes, although their lyrics aren't anywhere near as tear jerking. I am thinking both these bands are better to see live, they sound like they put on a good show. IV-

S.K.-

Risk

3649 Clement St.

San Francisco, CA 94121

Q.W.-

This Here Records

P.O. box 481

Chattanooga, TN 37401

V/A

"The Sound of a Room Full of Heads Nodding" 10'



Possibly the best 10" comp. of eight of the best punk bands ever to come out of Ann Arbor. Put out by No!no Records the line up goes like this: Axis of Evil, Kick Like Crazy, the Rants, Mazinga, Bonk!, MHz, Rael Rean, and Surrounded by Snakes, and if you've never heard of them you by all means should. Unfortunately this is more like a rest in peace album as every band on it has since broken up save for the Rants. Get this album, then put yourself on a mission to find these bands' old albums, too, then catch the Rants live before they go the way of the others, too. IV- \$7.00 ppd

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Ann Arbor MI. 48104

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SHOULDA BEEN THERE

Hey look someone's going to put out a bunch of old Ann Arbor bands.

uh, So!

There is a ton of bands that after recording and didn't release it, or said-out and never re-release it.

OR they put out 15 demos and that's it. Some just have practice tapes or live recording, but I'd be nice to hear those.

That is so stupid! once a band breaks up leave it at that if they weren't good enough to put out their own crappy record then.

Man but...

uh...

It's... old school...

Funk's SWEET! gimmie that!

No! No RECORDS/ARBO SELF EDUCATE

THE "SHOULDA BEEN THERE" WILL BE A COLLECTION OF UNRELEASED, OUT-OF-PRINT, LIVE AND/OR DEMO RECORDINGS FROM AREA BANDS. WE NEED PEOPLE TO HELP IN PUTTING THIS PROJECT TOGETHER. IF YOU HAVE ANY AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDINGS OF THE BANDS LISTED BELOW, CONTACT US AT: (434) 327-3783 or (517) 712-4020 or minivansarepunk@yahoo.com

AAB	Brewts	El Cheapo	Lovesick	Rael Rean	Typhoid Mary
Action Tiger	Brutal Youth	Etch-A-Sketch	Madax	Restroom Poets	Undermind
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Antz	Cacti	Flashpapr	Mr. Velocity Hopkins	SalivationArmyMarchingdBand	
Arachibutrophobia Orchestra	Caffeinated Assault	4%	Moltov	Scheme	
Aural Sect	Cathode	Galen	Mortified	Scot's Pyrates	Wailing Wall
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Barbed Wire Playpen	Cloud Nine	Gondolier	Mt. Tai	Sonic's Rendezvous Band	
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MAX'S